

ETHICS,

Rational and Theological,

WITH

CURSORY REFLECTIONS

ON THE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

OF

D E I S M.

By JOHN GROSE, F.A.S.

Decipimur Specie Reſti.

HORACE.

L O N D O N:

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DEDICATION.

To his Grace, George Duke of Montagu,—Marquis of Monthermer,—Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, Master of the Horse to the King, of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council,—Governor and Captain of Windsor Castle, and Fellow of the Royal Society,

WHOSE universal benevolence and moderation render him the admiration of all parties,—whose constancy, —fidelity,—penetration, and perseverance prove him an invaluable treasure to the Sovereign and the Subject,—whose condescending regard to the Interests of Mankind constitute him an unshaken and invariable friend to Society, whose principal pleasure is the happiness of others,

DEDICATION.

and who is the constant patron of the indigent, and a protector from lawless Oppression, whose virtues shine with equal brilliancy in a domestic as in a public Sphere,—who is equally distinguished for his illustrious actions, as by his noble descent,—to this bright star in the political Hemisphere is this tribute of Gratitude and Respect, (with his Grace's permission)

Most humbly inscribed

by His Grace's

much obliged

and devoted

humble Servant,

14 NO 63

JOHN GROSE.

THE

T H E
P R E F A C E.

IN an age so enlightened as the present, when the most extensive improvements are made in every branch of science, and the most seemingly insurmountable difficulties cannot resist the unwearied efforts of enquiry, when neither metaphysical subtilties can deceive the penetrating eye of criticism, nor rhetorical beauties fascinate the scrutinous observer, when refinement is at its zenith of perfection, and literature in its meridian lustre, when the errors of past ages are avoided, and in the polite arts the present, seems to outvie even the boasted sons of Greece or Athens, when competitors arise from every quarter of the literary hemisphere, and challenge subordinate candidates for popular applause to the unequal combat:—at such an æra to emerge from obscurity, is an attempt as formidable as replete with danger.

The

vi THE PREFACE.

The following lucubrations are the mere effusions of impartial, unbiaſſed reflection, intended to demonſtrate the union of two* ſciences generally diſtinctly conſidered.—To effectuate this, as briefly as poſſible, and without pretending to eſtabliſh a ſyſtem, though there is one uniform plan in the whole, various ſubjects are introduced, and where moſt connected with the deſign, have by investigating the different opinions of the ancient philoſophers endeavoured to ſhew, that the ſcience of Ethics on the principles of reaſon, is only a prelude, and not contradictory to what Revelation inculcates, hereby proving its rationality in oppoſition to the Deiſts, who contend for the light of nature only.—The manner in which every ſubject has been treated, is briefly this, after the exordium, a definition, then the various opinions of philoſophers and others thereon are recited, and the concluſion deduced from the whole, by the impartial evidence of *Reaſon*, and the corroborating testimony of *Theology*.—As a ſtudied brevity has ſtimulated the writer in the whole of this undertaking, the candid will be pleaſed to recollect that prolixity is not the genuine characteristic of *Eſſays*, and where it is ſuperficial, the ingenious reader, it is hoped, will by his own reflection,

* Ethics and Theology.

compensate

T H E P R E F A C E. vii

compensate for that defect. Nothing could have induced the Author to have assumed the title prefixed to this work, but a desire of varying from the hackneyed phrase of *Moral Essays*, and as this fully includes the Author's *Intention*, how far it answers its description in the work itself, the reader must alone determine. Truth has been so often mutilated by fanatics on the one hand, or mere moral theologians on the other, that a medium between those two extremes has been the grand object of this undertaking; for while the incoherencies of the former have rendered the most sublime truths ridiculous, the prejudices of the latter have circumscribed them within the districts of social obligations, forgetting that the claims of heaven, are more justly extensive than those of men. As some apology may be requisite for intruding on the public notice, let it be observed, that several of these *Essays* having appeared in some of the periodical prints, the Author was strongly solicited by many of his readers to publish them in a volume, which at their request he has submitted to. If indeed, Deism can be refuted with more propriety in one character than another, a layman, who has no interest in the dispute, nor as the infidel calls it, any craft thereby to support, is on *that* score most likely to succeed in his endeavour.

viii THE PREFACE.

your. The most undiscerning will easily perceive numerous defects in this undertaking, but it is on the *candid* that the Author solely relies: as to the critics, or a legion of their time serving adherents, he would adopt the words of a celebrated genius, "Making human opinion the standard of truth, is like making the *cameleon* a standard of colour." — If a modern and approved writer could say, "I am far from thinking that all those who have depreciated our species, have been enemies to virtue, and have exposed the frailties of their fellow-creatures with any bad intention,*" the critic may remit somewhat of his native asperity, concerning the general tenor of this work in *that* particular. But resigned to my fate, whatever it be, shall conclude with the following words adopted on a former occasion——*va mon enfant prend ta fortune.*

14 NO 63

* Hume's Essays.

ESSAY



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E S S A Y I.

O N

H A P P I N E S S.

B



ON
HAPPINESS.
ESSAY I.

- “ Not Happiness itself makes good her Name ;
“ Our very wishes give us not our wish.
“ How distant oft the thing we doat on most,
“ From that for which we doat, *Felicity?*”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

USHERED into a state of existence, where the flattering voice of pleasure,—and the threatening language of pain alternately resound;—where Vice is arrayed with splendour,—and Virtue *scarcely* seen,—where honour is applied to folly,—and esteem where shame is due;—where favour leans to interest,—and where *Merit* is but a *Name*;—where Friendship is a *prostituted* term,—and *Gain* includes respect:—in this *inverted* Paradise, deluded Man goes far in search of *Happiness*.

If any principle is *innate*, it is the desire of *Happiness*, and if any practice in such pursuit is contradictory and vain, it is that of *Man*.

The influence of the animal system on the rational,—as subject to a variety of incidents,—impedes the progress of the mind,—and the contracted sphere for a capacious faculty to act in;—lessens the attainment, which ends in expectation *only*.—Hope sustains the shattered frame through various scenes of life,—the promised good obtained,—*Enjoyment* is sought,—but that has vanished long,—every effort ending as begun,—the question still remains,—*Where is Happiness to be found?*—Perplexing cares annoy a pleasing charm, the fear of *losing* makes possession *pain*, —increasing benefits make increasing ills,—and bliss is only known by woe endured before.—The grand pursuit of mankind in general, is after *this* desirable attainment, and there are nearly as many *supposed* ways of obtaining

taining this invaluable blessing, as enquirers for it.—The *Miser* supposes happiness alone to be found in riches,—and fondly imagines himself in the third heaven, when counting his hoarded Mass:—but alas! what vain delusion!

All the treasures of an eastern prince, cannot procure health,—contentment,—or peace to the troubled Mind. On the contrary,—where riches are possessed,—care and anxiety will intrude.—The infatuated mortal, whose soul is wrapt with anxious care to increase his accumulated wealth,—fails in acquiring that enjoyment, which affluence was designed to afford.—Vain then is the effort of obtaining *Happiness*, from a source thus despicable and mean.—Others are seeking this inestimable prize in a life of dissipation and extravagance,—but such persons labour under greater delusion than the former,—and if not undeceived e're it be too late, will find it by sad experience. The polite rake,—the modern

B 3

beau,—

beau,—and the votaries of fashion seek *Happiness* in a way, which by the more prudent and considerate, would be deemed the extreme of *misery*;—*their* happiness is but of short duration, too trivial to compensate for the dreadful remorse that ensues.—The *Libertine*, in the slavery of sensuality with his debauched associates, enjoys what *he* calls *Happiness*.—In the midst of his revellings, he considers himself in the height of bliss, when in truth he is in the Depths of wretchedness.

Let us review the opposite character,—and revert to the formal pharisee,—who imagines by his piety he insures not only happiness here, but hereafter.—Such by a regular course of living may be nearer an enjoyment of this privilege,—but even *here*, *Happiness* is *not* to be found. The vicissitudes of life, and the afflictions incidental to *all*, will ever interrupt fruition.—The *Philosopher* likewise, who regulates his conduct by reason,—is a stranger

stranger to this refined acquisition,—and though he supposes himself a participant of it;—yet in the end finds himself deceived.—From the perplexity annexed to a crude system of action, he often embarrasses his mind, and is deluded in the object:—in the dark researches of mystery he is bewildered,—and as reason is overpowered by *Infinitude*,—his discoveries terminate, — his curiosity is checked, — his Wisdom confounded, — and his *Happiness ended*. By taking a more regular survey of the different pursuits of mankind, from the monarch to the peasant, we may observe, their grand and united aim is *Happiness*.—The *Monarch* whose ideas are more exalted, and whose person more dignified, would scorn to partake of that, which the subject would rejoice at; Power, — Grandeur, — and Dignity, — are the three principal things, that constitute his supposed Happiness. — In these he is often frustrated, — his power checked, — his grandeur lessened, — his dignity debased. —

The works of Providence tend often to effect these changes.—Many suppose that in the splendour of a court, happiness is to be found,—but the seat of royalty is often the region of misery;—for by reason of their exalted situations, troubles are more numerous.—Others in a medium between riches, and poverty, look for Happiness, and if *any where*, it is most likely to be found *here*, but relative, incidental, and personal Afflictions even to them, impede and subside this blessing.—The *Peasant*, in his silent cottage, remote from the busy scenes of the metropolis, is often thought to possess it, but poverty impedes,—though rusticity promotes.—By *Fame* and *Popularity* some are led to imagine Happiness is to be attained,—but alas! not the most renowned Warrior, or learned Sage, could ever in *this* way secure permanent bliss; for as Fame and Popularity when attending us seem pleasing, its declension or removal is on the other hand debasing.—Thus while on one part it holds forth

forth complete felicity, on the other, it threatens inexpressible distress.

While success accompanies the undertakings of the *Statesman*,—and the voice of *Faction* is no longer heard,—being surrounded by numbers, who unite in a constant succession of praises,—he vainly fancies himself *Happy*;—but how soon is he awakened from his golden dream:—his schemes having been frustrated,—mistakes appear evident,—and thus his fame declines,—and though before elated by a stream of commendations, he is now overwhelmed by a torrent of abuse.—It is the same among lower orders of people, the man who expects by a circumspect behaviour, and exemplary conduct, to arrive at some degree of Happiness by enjoying the *good opinion* of people in general, is disappointed in his expectations, by the calumnies and slander of a censorious World.—In all the philosophic researches of human nature, their system of felicity was ever subject
to

to the vicissitudes of mortality,—but the *Happiness* to which Divine Revelation, the *only* proper guide of our actions directs us, is not only in part, enjoyed in *this* life, but will have complete fruition in that which is to come.

That which admits of, and is liable to *interruption*, cannot *justly* be called *Happiness*;—but this which revelation informs us of, admits of *no* interruption.—The consolations of religion are the *earnest* of future Happiness, though liable to many impediments:—whereas that bliss, which the soul in a state of separation from the body is capacitated to enjoy, is such as no tongue can describe,—thought conceive,—or words express. Hence it is self-evident, that *Man* is designed for greater Happiness than *this* transitory life *can* afford.—Felicity, strictly considered, is *that* state which mere animal existence without other appendages cannot possibly attain to. Yet to brighten the scene we must allow that
there

there is a comparatively — *happy Man*, and who properly answers that enlivening character shall briefly, be the present object of enquiry.—To accelerate the growth of the vegetable creation,—a soil well adapted is indispensibly requisite,—so likewise to felicitate a complex and variegated sphere of action;—a permanent basis can alone produce the superstructure of tranquillity and ease.

The *happy*, — is the *virtuous Man*, — he whose principles are emblazoned with the transparency of truth, — and whose practice wears a constant form. To him honour is a sacred tie, — equity the darling of his days, — and benevolence the offspring of his life. — The law of conscience binds him in every concern, — fidelity reigns through his whole procedure, and his general utility renders him the admiration of all. — Thus treading the paths of virtue and piety, — longevity proves perhaps his portion, — a pleasing retrospect of the past, presents itself to view; —

view ;—and well founded consolation in future cheers the idea of dissolution.—He then is *happy* in *properly* enjoying the present,—and considering the future. As a traveller through life he *feasts* not on the delights of sense,—but values them so far as they administer to his wants.—To him poverty seems more tolerable,—because he views an inheritance to come,—to him affliction seems less,—because he knows the *necessity* of it.

He then is not always the *happy Man* who possesses most,—endures the least—or whose years roll on in outward peace,—but the Man who though possessing little *enjoys* it *best*,—and though in a menial sphere, rendered noble by the dignity of Virtue.—To acquire Happiness,—the Philosophers refer us to *contentment*, as if like science it were attainable by study and attention ;—a reference this, delusory indeed,—since that which is a *gift* is not to be *acquired* ;—
and

and such contentment is.—Contentment may be, and often is, the effect of ignorance and inattention ;—nor does it always proceed from a proper Cause.—The Prophets of old spake of many, who cried Peace,—when there was no Peace ;—therefore their quietude of mind was the effect of delusion. The *Miser* is perhaps *content* in his riches,—and the *Libertine* in his profligacy,—but *what* ground have they for it ?—The cause is neither virtuous principles,—nor moral practice—the effect therefore is present ease at the risque of future misery.

Encompassed by difficulties without—annoyed by impediments within,—our wills—our judgment—and our reason,—being likewise the slaves of passion ; it cannot be matter of surprize, that felicity is scarcely attainable.—The *Mind* is the seat of *Happiness*,—and whether from natural, or external causes it is excluded,—unless every obstruction be removed,—and the mighty *vacuum* of Desire
saturated,—

saturated,—there can be *no* real Happiness.—Thus too close an attachment to the *present*, is the occasion of so many seeking Happiness in *present* things;—and for want of more extensive desire and knowledge,—they disregard *futurity*;—as though like the brute creation they were formed, but for *one* state of existence.—It is demonstrably evident from every principle of action,—that the summit of human expectancy is *Satisfaction*,—and this is generally supposed to be included in the idea of *Happiness*.

But that a rational creature, who is convinced that the great expanse of human intellection cannot arrive to the completion of desire, in a state where matter and spirit are co-existent and mutually depraved;—that such should pursue it in this contracted sphere,—seems astonishing. Therefore it may be proper to observe, that *Disappointment* in *this* instance among others serves to increase our misery, and that *True Felicity* can

can only be found in that state where we shall be capable of enjoying it;—where the objects of sense, will not engage our attention,—nor the allurements of vice, in any wise impair our comforts. Nothing short of perfection can render us *completely* happy,—since where imperfection gains admision, it ceases to be *Happiness*.

As mutation,—uncertainty,—and interruption,—preclude mortals from enjoying temporal *felicity*,—*immortality* can alone effect a blessing; where *immortality* and *perpetuity* become necessary.

14 NO 63

E S S A Y II.

O N

R E L I G I O N.

C



O N

RELIGION.

ESSAY II.

“ Religion’s All. Descending from the skies
“ To wretched Man, the Goddess in her left
“ Holds out this World,—and, in her right, the next.”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

LAUNCHING on the rude ocean
of tempestuous life,—hope proves
buoyant for a time,—but when the bil-
lows of distress remove the anchor from
its wonted hold;—*Religion* serves to
still the boisterous waves, and guide us
to the haven of relief.—On the other
hand when *prosperity* irradiates the
cheering scene,—and lulls us on the
downy bed of ease;—*Religion* counter-
poises every snare, and makes felicity
eventually a good.—Hence whether
elated or depressed, a balance over the
turbulency of affection must be steadily

maintained, and this Religion,—and Religion *only*, can abidingly effect.—From the depraved state of human nature it appears,—that without supernatural aid, none can perform a *religious* act, for although it differs in some respects from others, it agrees in this,—that it is neither hereditary or constitutional.—On the contrary,—Mankind in general despise this noblest of all virtues, and by nature, are enemies to Religion.—The natural inclinations of that corrupt fountain the heart,—and the dictates of Religion are diametrically opposite.—The World with all its ensnaring charms, has long declared hostilities against it,—and every prevailing passion of the mind, bids defiance to its kindest invitations.—View the affluent and gay,—the modern and refined,—they refuse to listen to its voice, though they fear its rebukes.—The enemies of Religion are numerous and strong,—calculated to divert the mind, and satisfy the speculative enquirer.—*Reason* exalts her tower-
ing

ing head with an assuming mien,—and seeks by her delusive tongue to baffle or refute.—*Learning* decked with all her costly garments puts in her claim,—and stigmatizes this divine virtue with terms of reproach and disdain.—*Wisdom* commands obeisance to her nod, and decrees her sentence to reject.—Here then we have a brief view of some of its adversaries,—*not* that this superlatively exalted privilege is contrary to true Reason, Wisdom, and Learning, though counterfeit Reason, and the like oppose it;—but how soon does the Conquest appear, when Religion displays herself with unequalled Majesty!—Whither must *Reason* flee,—when Religion that is *above*, and yet *consistent* with Reason is revealed? Where must Wisdom and Learning vanish,—when the divine union of both those sublunary acquirements shall appear?—The naturalist,—when nature is his theme, displays eloquence and wisdom; but when the President of nature descends with more than seraphic lustre,—

lustre,—his oratory ceases,—and his wisdom is confounded.—Religion differs essentially from other systems, since it is not speculative, but proceeds from renovation and is actuated by principle.—It also differs in another respect,—it is not to be acquired by human diligence. By attention and study, Learning may,—but this cannot.—It is not derived from merit,—but it is a free gift;—nor is this divine virtue universally bestowed on the human race,—for but few comparatively are the *real* recipients of this blessing, or manifest their possession of it, by its influence on their conduct.—It is not confined to age,—station,—or degree,—sect,—or denomination.—External profession cannot constitute *genuine* piety,—nor be the *sole* evidence thereof.—Neither birth or education insure the possession, as it is differently bestowed on all. Neither does it consist in any particular credence,—system of doctrine,—or mode of worship.—It is not transmitted to us from
our

our ancestors by virtue of their actions,—as a temporal estate or honour, but is variously disposed.—It does not consist in outward ceremonies or prescribed attire,—nor in mere attendance on sacred institutions, though such is the bounden duty of every man.—The idea that the philosophers entertained of Religion was,—a diligent adherence to the paths of moral virtue,—which they considered as the greatest possible attainment, but without derogating from its *proper* excellence we may observe, that in reality the *principle* and *motive* can alone determine the act. That which flows from a principle of love and gratitude,—may be deemed a *religious* act,—but that which is done as a procuring cause attributing the *merit* to *ourselves*, is *not true* Religion.—There is a reverence due from the creature to the Creator, which *all* are in duty bound to pay him, as the Author of their being and well-being. As God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth,—a

bare attendance on sacred institutions without the fervent desires of the mind, is drawing near with the mouth, while the heart is far from him. Religion as systematic is perfectly rational and consistent,—as preceptive,—the promoter of *true* Morality.—Divested of enthusiasm,—blind impulses, vague assertions,—and incoherent exclamations,—it is equally illustrious as the most refined ornament of an intelligent being,—as it is diffusive in its benign effects. Its genuine dictates never fail to produce the most universal and unbounded philanthropy—bigotry is remote from its designs, being no other than its common counterfeit.—Charity and benevolence are its usual characteristics,—and a concern for the real welfare of others, its natural effect.—In every character among men, Religion shines unequalled,—and where it reigns, every essential benefit follows.—Religion is the most exalted privilege that mortals are capable of enjoying, and though it *includes*, yet it far *exceeds*

exceeds the possible exertions of moral virtue. Religion *necessarily* produces virtue,—but virtue *cannot* produce Religion,—since the latter is principally social,—the former, actually *Divine*.—Virtue likewise may in some respects be considered as a *property* of the virtuous,—but Religion is a preter-natural gift.—The learned GROTIUS observes, we ought to avoid the example of the heathen in two instances,—the worship of false deities, and a licentious practice.

Thus after a number of premises necessary in the introduction of this subject, we are arrived at the turning point,—the grand criterion of *true* Religion—the *Heart*. Vain are all our pretences to this noble and divine privilege, if the Heart is not engaged in the matter.—Though at times lifeless and formal, yet if *experimentally* participants,—there is existing in us a living principle.—The reader may probably enquire,—Are *all* men by *nature*, or in consequence of
their

their *animal* existence, partakers of this blessing? Experience will immediately testify, that *none* are.—From the innate depravity of human nature, the will and affections are corrupted,—the mind defiled by Sin,—and the whole natural system a complication of maladies.—By reason of this universal contagion, the powers and faculties of the Soul by nature are averse to this divine inhabitant of the heart.—Hence an entire change becomes absolutely necessary, in order to receive this greatest of all blessings.

Thus renovated, Religion sways the sceptre, and claims universal dominion over the will and affections, influencing the conduct,—and reducing into practice what is received in the judgment.—It is vain for any to pretend to this privilege, whose lives are contradictory and disgraceful, for a divine *change* can alone constitute *true* Religion,—and that *only* can be effected by the sovereign power of Almighty Grace.—Did Religion consist

sist only in received notions—imbibed principles,—or particular credences, the learned and judicious would probably be the *sole* possessors.—Not thus hath benign Goodness bestowed this blessing,—for as the *Heart* is the grand recipient, it often diffuses its happy effects among the simple and ignorant of this world.—That *true Religion* is the Gift of the Spirit of God,—is a doctrine that may excite the contemptuous sneer, and indignant frown of the Sceptic and Deist; but however they may censure it,—*none other* will avail us in the sight of an omniscient and omnipresent Being.—If the animal system is, as most will allow, immediately governed by the *Air*, and thereby frequently rendered salubrious or morbidic,—why with equal rationality may we not say, that the intellectual powers are likewise subordinate to a *superior Agent*?

It is somewhat contradictory and strange, that those very persons who
assert

assert *Sensation* to be one of the mediums of science,—should deny its being likewise *necessary* in Religion, and brand such with the ignominious stigma of enthusiasts,—who contend for *experimental* or *sensitive* Religion, as an evidence of its existence. No System can be operative and influential, until it makes some impression on the *will* and *affections*, since we may implicitly assent to a Truth as such, when it has no effect on our conduct; for instance—*All* men acknowledge themselves *mortal*;—but *few* act as if they *really* thought so. The cause is obvious, for the reason before assigned.—Moral precepts were enforced by the philosophers, as the way to become participants of Religion, but how vain and fruitless their exhortation!—since the subjects of this *real* happiness, are influenced by nobler motives to moral deportment.—If Religion as some define it, is no more than the worship of a Deity, the Pagan is entitled to the character. It is also the conceived notion of
of

of many, that Religion consists in a life of abstinence,—and therefore is of a gloomy nature. On the contrary,—all the joys the world can afford are not to be compared with those of Religion; for the former are but of short duration,—the latter durable and lasting. Another objection raised against this privilege is—that it leads to *Uncharitableness*,—’tis a groundless supposition,—for the value of it excites the recommendation of it, and that is *Charity*. The precepts of Religion, as they are intrinsically excellent, need no artificial adornments either of Eloquence or Learning.—As the excellence, value, or utility, of any thing is peculiarly evidenced by the effects it produces, so also does the happy tendency of Religion appear conspicuous in civil, relative, and domestic concerns.—While pregnant with reproof and admonition as a precept,—it is also replete with benefits and consolation to the possessor, in the constant practice of it.—Do the piercing arrows of adversity
affail

affail our dearest enjoyments? Is our darling offspring torn from our tender embraces, or an affectionate friend consigned to the abodes of Death? Are we reduced from the seat of affluence to poverty and want? Above all,—are we drawing near the verge of *Eternity*, and exceeding the reach of human aid,—when the joys of life cannot yield one gleam of comfort,—and all things wear a frowning aspect?—In the midst of each, or all of these, Religion can afford us its Divine support.—To the observant world Religion also manifests its intrinsic value.—Without it,—the theatre of existence would become a field of blood,—but with it, Justice—Integrity,—and Beneficence adorn the checquered scene by their invigorating Charms.—Could Religion claim unlimited domain, rapine,—cruelty,—and oppression, would cease to embitter life, and Peace would confer blessings on the sons of men, far exceeding those which the compleatest conquest can afford.—In civil life where
Religion

Religion is the source and spring of action, what numerous benefits result from the investiture of power and authority!

Government proves the refuge for distress,—and a fountain of continual aid.—Faction dies like the transient vapour, and returns to its original *nihility*, while unanimity crowns each procedure, and smiles on every undertaking for the common welfare of the land.—Where Religion dawns,—each relative engagement prospers under the auspices of virtue,—and harmony becomes the regular attendant of the nuptial scene,—fraud is banished the commercial line,—and equity constantly prevails between the Master and the Servant.—Religion is a barrier against chicanery and deceit, and the common artifices of mankind dare not be wilfully entertained, by the subject of *true* Religion.—That Religion infallibly renders men good subjects, and good members of society is evident,

evident, because such are in conscience bound to do *well*, by the Laws both of God and Man.

Search creation round then in quest of virtues,—explore the hidden paths of science,—or, the most boasted charm in life;—and when all shall be extolled to their highest summit of perfection, none can be found equal in its properties and extent to *True Religion*.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

E S S A Y I I I .

O N

F R I E N D S H I P .

D



ON
FRIENDSHIP.

ESSAY III.

“ Vir bonus et sapiens, dignis ait esse paratum ;
“ Nec tamen ignorat quid distent æra lupinis.
“ Dignum præstabo me etiam pro laude merentis.”

HORACE, *Ep.* vii. *Lib.* i.

AMIDST all the vicissitudes of life, Friendship is a healing balm,—the harbinger of peace,—and the messenger of joy. Society, one end of our existence,—is promoted by this communicative blessing. Here hostilities cease,—and the dove alone presides. Animosities vanish—Unanimity reigns. What are all our joys, where this angelic virtue is wanting? What constitutes our social happiness—and our civil peace,—but Friendship? What ties will subject,—where this principle is not our guide? What can more powerfully constrain and restrain,—than the bonds of Friendship?

44 ON FRIENDSHIP.

All the powers of argument or reason will not avail without this principle,—either to restrain from injuring or excite to benefit.—Where this beatific virtue reigns over the mental shore,—the lion may lie down with the lamb;—Contention is no longer heard, divisions healed, and union established.—Though various are the ways in which this principle manifests itself—yet all center in regard to the object, and an exact uniformity in procedure. What renders it far above all description is, that it is a secret motive—produced by a secret cause,—and actuated by secret regard, known only by the parties.—Numerous are the passions of the human breast,—and as variously drawn forth, as different in their nature.

This is an inward conception of the mind, in which the will and affections are consulted,—and which increases with our years. Friendship, when real, is an ingrafted principle, that takes deep
root

root in the heart,—and branches forth in the actions; and although by adverse providences, the boughs are often lopped off;—yet the root still remains as a living principle, daily springing up into action. Thus although the scorching heat of persecution seems to exhaust its virtues, yet the gentle dew of reflection restores, and invigorates the subject.—Where the will is not brought into complete and full acquiescence in the cause, the work is drudgery,—and is no more than slavish fear, whereby it is observable, that the ties of nature or consanguinity do not create this principle, as then it would be the necessary consequence of affinity. On the contrary,—as it is produced by a cause which appears deserving of it, it is never placed without this seeming appearance, however the issue may prove it groundless. Thus in proportion as the goodness of the cause either increases or lessens,—so Friendship flourishes or declines.—Having shewn the source and

46 ON FRIENDSHIP.

spring of action, I shall now proceed to consider its effects:—The principle being noble, it is natural to suppose the effects are the same. It is first proper to observe, that disinterested motives are a necessary evidence of real Friendship, which lead the participant not to communicate this blessing merely to the prosperous, but to the poor and distressed also.

When fortune smiles, riches increase, and honour bestows its laurel, the world will ever profess Friendship. But where is the man, the *Rara Avis*,—who while calamity frowns, affliction threatens,—and poverty impends, will aid and assist, comfort and relieve? This is the test—this the criterion.—A Friend in need, is a Friend indeed;—and such only deserve the name. Friendship not only implies a principle,—but an act—not merely a profession—but performance.—The Friendship of the world in general, if it deserves the name, is merely professional;

professional ; and consists in a number of promises or declarations which they never intend to execute, but mean only to delude. How greatly is such a conduct to be abhorred, and yet how common ! Here let us take a cursory view of the different degrees of Men, who deceive under this character.—The flattering Courtier, learned in all the arts of sophistry, readily promises his solicitous dependants what he never means to execute.—The social Man, whose sphere exceeds not mediocrity,—strenuously professes Friendship to him whose rank is superior, amidst the blaze of wealth and the distinctions of honour.—But should the exalted party, by an adverse providence, be hurled from the pinnacle of power to the dregs of submission, furnished with every hope professions can afford, he has recourse to his *former* friend, who *now* receives him but with—the poignancy of disdain.

These are some of the effects of human Friendship, which though they glitter at the view,—yet vanish in the proof.—How fleeting then are all our enjoyments! How vain are all our comforts!—To announce the rarity of Friendship is a thing so common,—that every man's experience sufficiently proves it, without the aid *of any* other means of information. But to assign a reason why it is so seldom to be met with,—may prove more to our satisfaction than the bare mention of the evil itself. It may be thought ungenerous to suppose, though observation proves it, that the world is an enemy's country. Notwithstanding the police of civilized nations, the refinement of manners, the improvements in science, added to various elegant attainments, mankind will be still found in general to be governed by the rules of self-interest. And as a further proof of this assertion,—although society itself is formed on the broad basis

basis of mutual dependence,—yet scarcely any man thinks himself bound to consider the common welfare otherwise than as subordinate to his own;—or in other words, when he has secured himself,—he is concerned for the safety of others. Can it then be matter of surprize, that even among intelligent creatures, — Friendship is so rare, when the very circle of existence itself is surrounded with enemies? But supposing that the epithet *Inimical* should be thought too severe in its general application, to that noble animal called man,—suffer me to remit somewhat of its apparent asperity, by deeming the world naturally, socially, and politically selfish; on which principle also it is evident,—that true Friendship must of necessity be rare. To render this truth still more incontrovertible, we may observe, that a mind destitute of generous sentiments, and void of any noble impressions, cannot well be susceptible of a principle so refined as that
of

of Friendship; therefore, in order for its possible existence, there must previously be a capacity or disposition to receive it;—powers equal to its exertions, and a practice conformable to its injunctions. Though at the same time I would not be understood to insinuate, that either natural or acquired knowledge were indispensable pre-requisites,—since minds in a great degree destitute of either,—have been frequently found participants of this invaluable privilege. The argument therefore principally implies,—that the sphere of action in which man is placed, is rather calculated to destroy than cultivate Friendship,—since the pursuits of life are either sensual or interested,—matter of pleasure or profit.—The inference we may draw from hence is,—that every thing that tends to prove its rarity, displays its intrinsic excellence.

One grand cause of human Friendship's being so precarious is,—because man is a mutable creature,—subject to various tempers and dispositions,—prejudices or antipathies. It is often seen that those from whom we expect most Friendship, evidence the least,—which disappointment in us arises from a groundless apprehension of their sincerity. As Friendship is a mental conception of regard, for a particular object, it is often deceived,—which being discovered, the Friendship gradually lessens.—In order for the duration or continuance of mutual Friendship, it is necessary there should exist between the parties a similarity of sentiment. This is often the means of creating it, and therefore is essential to its progress and increase. By observation we find, that persons after a short acquaintance become, the mutual participants of this communicative blessing, by reason of a uniformity of sentiment and disposition; hence

hence it is rarely seen, that the simple and wise unite in these bonds. As the grand design of this social privilege is to impart our joys and sorrows to each other, unless there is an unity of mind, this freedom cannot take place.—Can the modern profligate thus unite with the pious christian, or vice versa? Their dispositions, their joys, and their pleasures, are as opposite as light to darkness.

Hence it is self-evident, that without a similarity of sentiment there can be no real Friendship. Endued with this noble principle, and possessed of a *real* Friend, we may consider ourselves as highly favoured above many of our fellow mortals; but alas! our joys must have a period—and separation for a time take place.—Though similarity of sentiment and disposition are means greatly conducive to Friendship,—yet considered abstractedly as a generous principle that
diffuses

diffuses itself for the real good of another, it will not exert itself in any thing but what appears subservient to such end;—and consequently alienated from vice in the practice,—though mutually approved in the inclination and desires. This position is intended to demonstrate,—that *that* Friendship, if it may be so called, which is not connected with virtuous principles, is improperly honoured with so sacred a name;—since the real Friend, though of the same disposition,—cannot encourage another, in what he is conscious is an evil, for whom he entertains an undissembled Friendship. Admitting this to be true—the Friendship, so called, of the vicious, is only a league to commit evil, without partaking in any degree of this sublime principle. On the other hand where Friendship properly exists, it necessarily produces uniformity of conduct, founded on the purest intentions, and actuated by the most honourable motives.

—Thus,

54 O N F R I E N D S H I P .

—Thus, although Friendship in itself is pleasing, yet its duration being short, as subject either to mutability or dissolution, we must say of this as of all other sublunary enjoyments, “ They are less than “ nothing, and altogether Vanity.”

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY IV.

ON

TRUTH.



ON
T R U T H.

ESSAY IV.

“ Clitarchi probatur ingenium, fides infamatur.”

QUINTILIAN.

OF every species of falshood and deception,—none can be more injurious in its nature,—or prejudicial in its effects,—than that, which is directed at the understanding;—and perverts the design of reason, in the most interesting and important concerns.—No poison can diffuse itself with equal malignity like error,—and yet probably, no means of destruction so flattering in its appearances. The mind, without the culture of information and experience, is constantly exposed to the ravages of delusion;—while like the garden not immured by art,—it becomes liable to the spoil of every invader,—and in the
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issue, produces nothing but the unfruitful weed of folly. Contemplation and enquiry are some of the most refined pursuits of an intelligent creature.—Investigation gratifies the scientific,—and observation, the curious part of mankind. But while perception is an act of the mind, that, as it were, gathers in a stock of ideas for the several faculties to work upon,—many things become necessary, to prevent the fatal influences of error;—which contaminates where it gains admittance.—Hence in all researches, whether Theological,—Ethical,—or Philosophical,—the *professed* object of Enquiry,—and indeed the most *important*, is *Truth*.

A moment's consideration of the various hindrances and impediments, in the way of human comprehension,—added to the several prejudices arising from *things*,—from *words*, from *ourselves*, and from *other persons*, which as an eminent Logician observes are, “ The undoubted
“ springs

“ springs of false judgment”—a single review of these, is sufficient to convince us how arduous a task it is to arrive at *Truth*. But on the other hand, we are not to become Sceptics, doubting every thing because there are many difficulties to contend with—but rather, to consider it like the purest ore, which is surrounded with inferior dross;—and that when refined from every baser metal, displays its intrinsic value with more effulgent lustre. The *prejudices of Education*, in a great degree retard our enquiries after truth, since men, especially of weak minds, are naturally attached to the first principles they imbibe. The doctrine of the parent or the nurse is held sacred—and what their ancestors have been zealous contenders for, they by tradition conclude must be necessarily *right*. Principles adapted to our particular genius or inclination,—are again often mistaken for Truth, because probably they favour some turn of fancy, or other private purpose.—Others through a mix-

ture of enthusiasm, ignorance, or contracted ideas, are still more ridiculous in their limitations and definitions of *Truth*, by confining it, perhaps, to one set of words, and a phrase that does not exactly correspond, with what they have been accustomed to hear and approve, is at once denominated *Erroneous*. Others again, through false deductions and wrong conclusions, affixing improper senses to particular terms, and applying them to circumstances and things, altogether different, call Truth, Error, and Error, Truth, without being in any wise, a judge of either. Such then is the absolute slavery of the human understanding, — that by the wiles of oratory, — and the ensnaring charms of rhetoric, men have been led to assent to things as *true*, in *one* dress of words, when the *same* assertions in *another*, would have been denied as *false*. Imagination, that delusive phantom, has been the source of many errors, and *sprights* of every size and shape have occasionally arisen

arisen from this endless chimera. *Self-love* also furnishes us, with many occasions of error, by representing all things favourable that relate to self, however adverse, they may in reality be. The doctrine of *Probability* has entangled many,—yea, too many in the fatal snare of delusion, for by denying *all* things that are improbable,—and assenting to whatever is probable, are means by which we shall ever be deceived. To attempt to judge of things, that surpass our judgment,—is only to plunge deeper into mystery, and confusion. Natural attainments, as well as literature in general, have too often been subservient to error. The ignorant are deceived, for want of knowing *any* thing,—and the learned, because they think they know *all* things.—“ Every learned critic, says an ingenious author, has his own hypothesis,” and each takes care, so far as he is capable, to make his *own* opinion appear *right*. The various tempers of men are also, too great assistants

to deception,—as for instance, the *credulous*, and *dogmatic*.—The *credulous* man implicitly assents to *every* thing that he *hears*,—scarcely possessed of any sentiment of his own, he relies on the bare assertions of another,—especially when it comes from some respectable character, as either the vicar, or the lawyer of the parish. That such, must be remote from Truth in many instances, is evident.—Nor is the *dogmatic* person more exempt from error, since principles in him, like a subterraneous fire break forth on almost every occasion, in a dreadful volcano,—that with irresistible violence carries all before it. So far distant are such from Truth,—that conviction can scarcely penetrate their minds, by nature impregnable.—Though Reason teems through every effort of opposition, yet such instead of viewing Truth therein, are blinded by the *smoke* of *zeal*, that *burns* within them. Mutability of disposition, love of novelty, conformity to fashions, and various other evidences

evidences of human frailty, with the instances already recited, are certainly great obstructions to the mind, in its enquiries after Truth; to remedy which in a degree, some rules are indispenfibly necessary.

The utmost *candour* and *impartiality* are primarily requisite. To discern Truth, we must view it abstracted from *every* particular sentiment or party, and with a mind, entirely *open* to conviction. If bigotry has any share, there is great danger of deception. The most diligent attention, and scrupulous investigation proportioned to the importance of the subject, is also necessary. A superficial review seldom excels, in any thing. That every objection be answered,—and every position *evident*, is likewise requisite. That the authority pleaded in behalf, and that adduced against any thing, be duly weighed, and impartially decided on. That every gleam of *sophism* should give place to

facts, and where probable evidence only can be obtained, to determine therein by the *merit*, or *respectability* of it.—Lastly —As detail may be generally traced to its origin—historical deception may in *some* degree be avoided, and as to other disquisitions, they vary in the modes of enquiry, according to their respective circumstances: Let us then proceed to the consideration of that grand and important question, *What is Truth?*—The word Truth has in general, a three-fold definition—*Matter of fact*—*An incontrovertible and self-evident proposition*—and *sincerity*. Things done or executed, are a kind of demonstrable evidence, that is literally *visual*, and consequently *not* to be *denied*.

But with respect to the Truth of any proposition, the grand and primary evidence is, *consistency*.—If we consider Truth as a relative term, it is necessarily governed by the antecedent,—as *theological Truth* has a two-fold evidence,

dence, *scriptural authority*—and *rational consistency*. As our ideas in general, are received through the medium of our *senses*, we cannot suppose, that a *certain* knowledge of Truth can be attained, by the same means of consistency in such things, as *exceed* our natural comprehension. Hence the Deists err so egregiously, in judging of *preter-natural* Truths by finite reason. For if we cannot form any adequate idea of infinity, how should we be capable of deciding in infinite concerns, by the feeble efforts of a contracted understanding?—Truth is a something, that either has existed,—may exist,—or *does* exist;—and has a *being*, either in some state or system. Words are the vehicle or channel, by which we communicate our ideas to others, and it is a certain *congruity* in them, that determines the probability, at least, of the assertions they contain. But an evil which occasions much controversy is this—The affixing *one* sense to a term adopted, which the hearer understands

derstands in *another*; the *different* applications of the said term, occasion a *seeming* difference of opinion, when probably, both *mean one* and the *same* thing. To remedy this evil, the declaimer or disputant should signify in *what sense* he uses such and such terms; this being done,—the *harmony* and *agreement* of his *own* assertions, will in a great measure determine the *Truth* of them.—For in *Truth* there is a perfect symetry and proportion. Mr. LOCKE says, “ *Clear* “ and *distinct* ideas are terms, which “ though frequent and familiar in men’s “ mouths, I have reason to think every “ one who uses, does not perfectly understand;” and from this apprehension, he substitutes the word *determinate*, as more strictly and properly expressive, of the nature of perception. But without derogating in any degree from the merit of so respectable an author,—suffer me to observe, that Truth in many instances, carries its own *evidence with it*, in opposition to the specious pretences
of

of error. The laws of nature have so happily provided for us herein, that Truth is not only acquiesced in, by the *judgment*, but also approved by the *conscience*.—Some may object to this, observing—That the vassals of deception rest content, in their *delusion*.—But this, so far from disproving my assertion, serves only to shew, that *when* conscience is supine or inactive, a man *may* rest contented in delusion; for the Conscience is represented in this case, “*Seared as with a hot iron.*”

That such a principle, as is designed to approve what is *right*, and condemn what is *wrong*—should *assent* to Truth, gives it a higher sanction, than any thing it could derive from the will or judgment. When the interest and policy of the world,—when the influences of fashion and refinement,—when politeness, good breeding, and the like, would unitedly *deny* it,—*Conscience* unreservedly declares for Truth. If we consider it as a character

rafter actually descriptive of the Deity, we must suppose it of a divine nature. The purity and excellence, the beauty and simplicity of Truth,—will rise superior to every subterfuge of evasion and falshood. Ultimately an adherence to Truth, is greatly to the interest of *all* men, since it renders them proper subjects of our confidence and esteem. It were well, if both in *Theology* and *Ethics*,—it were *more* attended to, which might be the case, if instead of pursuing the dictates of imagination, the steady rule of *consistency* was our guide. Few opinions are *consistent throughout*, and fewer still, are *consistent with themselves*. Our evident exposure in *all* things, to the snares of error, has been a constant lesson to us in the common concerns of life, whether civil or domestic,—yet but *few*, though the danger is greater, the evil being more prevalent, are apprehensive of error in concerns of the *greatest* importance. The great Governor of the Universe, knowing the natural
ignorance

ignorance of man,—hath been graciously pleased to give him a revelation of his will,—which as the sacred oracles of infallibility, is Truth in the very abstract. But man, blind to his *real* interest, is divided in part, into the *Speculative*, the *Sceptical*, and *Deistical*. The first, view the Truth as a system that *may* be,—but proceed *no* further—The second, view it as a thing that can *scarcely* be, and conclude with this frivolous deduction—and the last, consider it as a thing that *cannot* be, and from principles that *they* call *rational*. But each, unhappily perverts the idea of reason—since nothing can be more *irrational*, than to doubt or deny what *proves itself*, in spite of all opposition to be *Truth*. It may be further necessary to observe, that Truth is not only uniform and consistent, in its nature, but likewise *conclusive*. Evasion usually evinces itself, by a *sophistical* mode of reasoning, calculated more for embarrassment, than elucidation.—Utterly avoiding the least degree of *Dogmatism*,
facts

facts are generally recited in a plain,—positive—and familiar manner,—hence it is, that Truth has the appellation of *simple*, to denote its immaculate, and uncorrupted mode of existence. St. AMBROSE says, “Unadorned Truth hath
“something greater in it, than all the
“outside of wit, or all the powers of
“eloquence.” The *dignity* of Truth in a great measure consists, in its being infurmountable, — incontrovertible, — and self-evident. Though great are the powers of rhetoric and oratory, inso-much that the very *judgment* has been deceived by these superficial addresses to the passions, yet nothing can operate more forcibly on the minds of intelligent persons, than *Truth* stated and defended. Many through a very evident failing, which I shall take occasion to mention, have been inclined to suppose, that the greater part of people are *lulled* into supineness and indifference, under systematic declamations,—and that those who escape that evil, run perhaps into a
still

still greater, by imbibing error, or questioning the authenticity of the most essential Truths. But the failing arises from hence—That Truth is represented more as an *opinion*, than as *self-existent*,—as the discovery of *others*, than as what discovers *itself*. For it is by such, frequently stated,—and indeed judiciously, and what is more, perhaps well defended,—but when they mean to enforce it, the latter *contradicts* the former, and the former is *repugnant* to the latter. Thus by an *unhappy* method of conveying *contrary* ideas, when the *same* is intended, they make what is *true*, appear to be *false*, and what is *false*, be received as *true*. So that when the *consistency* of Truth is preserved *entire*, the system will operate powerfully, on the understanding that receives it in its proper order; on the other hand, where its *mechanism* is *disjointed*, through a fatal vein of contradiction,—the whole is either denied as preposterous and absurd, or proves the unhappy instrument
of

of deception. Hence we see the expediency of entertaining *proper* notions of Truth, and likewise the necessity of attending to every part of the analysis,—in order to preserve the whole. For as in political concerns, when a kingdom is divided against itself,—desolation follows, so is it in *etymological*,—when *words* contradict each other, the whole fabric of dissertation, must inevitably fall to the ground. Having thus generally descanted on the nature and evidence of Truth,—shall conclude by briefly signifying its utility as a precept, and its happy effect in the practice.

Mutual confidence is the basis and foundation of social happiness, to preserve this, Truth is unavoidably required. The practice of it insures, so many benefits to the possessor, that neither the frowns of the exalted, nor the envy of inferiors can possibly deprive him of. Besides the peace and satisfaction of mind that attend it,—render the man of integrity

integrity a proper subject to be confided in, even by his *enemies*, and his *friends* they value *his* esteem, because they are ever certain, that *Sincerity* accompanies his *professions*.—*Truth* is so sublime in its nature,—and so permanent in its effects, that it justly characterizes, and ought constantly to prevail in the Christian,—the Gentleman,—and the Scholar. In short, *without* it, man becomes poisonous as a *viper*, and diabolical as a *fiend*,—but so far as *Truth* is adhered to, he *resembles* an *Angel*.

14 NO 63

E S S A Y V.

O N

W I S D O M.

F 2



ON
W I S D O M.

ESSAY V.

— “ Quid virtus, et quid sapientia poscit,
“ Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulysses.”

HORACE.

THERE is no gift so valuable as Wisdom,—since it serves as a friend and conductor to guide us through life,—amidst all the dangers to which we are necessarily exposed. Riches without Wisdom are more a curse than a blessing;—honour without Wisdom is increasing our danger;—and learning when destitute of it, is the road to pedantry. Sapience is very aptly described by that lively image of Mentor and Telemachus,—the aspiring youth, without the aid of Mentor, would have fallen a prey to every flattering vice;—but led by his gentle persuasion, he treads the paths of Wisdom and uprightness. So essential to his present peace and future happiness

did Solomon consider this gift,—that he preferred it to all the riches of the world. As Wisdom is absolutely requisite to enjoy happiness,—the philosophers consider it as the grand criterion. Socrates says, “Wisdom is the composure of the mind, “for fools are troubled even in prosperity.” Pythagoras says, “Wisdom is the “strength, wall, and armour of a wise man.”—Democritus says, “Wisdom merits all things, a wise man may travel “any where, the whole world being his “country.” These were the sentiments of some of the philosophers respecting this inestimable gift,—by which it appears, that they considered it as a prelude to every other blessing.

It will be necessary to observe, that Wisdom is distinguished from learning;—as the former is a faculty;—the latter an ornament of the mind;—the one bestowed;—the other acquired. “Wisdom, “says a famed philosopher, is a right “understanding, a faculty of discerning “good from evil;—what is to be chosen,
“ and

“ and what rejected ; — a judgment
 “ grounded upon the value of things,
 “ and not the common opinion of them.”
 Here Wisdom differs from mere sentiment and fancy, and connects itself with prudence and discretion ;—it originates from judgment, and increases with knowledge. As it is a faculty of the mind, it certainly begins with our existence,—and increases with our years. It has an absolute power and controul over our actions ;—and as it sways the regal sceptre of our wills,—it disallows every irrational procedure. This is the philosophic definition, which is introduced merely, as an evidence of the estimation it was held in, by those ancient sages. Though it is designed thus to regulate our actions,—yet such is the frailty of human nature, that we often act diametrically opposite to the dictates of Wisdom and sound policy.—“ Wisdom, says
 “ Montaigne, does ever acquiesce with
 “ the present, and is never dissatisfied
 “ with its immediate condition.”

Contentment is here deemed a necessary proof of Wisdom,—and certain it is, that a wise man has greater reason to be content, than one, who is totally ignorant ;—yet we frequently see the latter more contented than the former. Another position then presents itself, the wise man in so doing, deviates from the rules of Wisdom ;—but yet Wisdom still claims contentment. It consists greatly in a knowledge of ourselves,—and he is the wisest man that knows most of himself. Seneca says, “ It sets a watch over our “ words and deeds.” This immediately respects preceptive Wisdom, — which serves as a guide to our actions, and a restraint on our passions. The same philosopher willing to exalt it to the highest summit of admiration, says, “ It is the “ habit of a perfect mind, and the per- “ fection of humanity raised as high as “ nature can carry it ;” yet if it has no better guide than nature, its attainments will be trivial indeed. Humanity, by reason of its apostacy from God,—can
never

never arrive unto perfection ; or be perfect, but in part. Thus Wisdom, though intrinsically excellent, yet from its polluted residence becomes fullied, and its glory lessened. Now a perfect mind cannot exist in an imperfect state, though a philosopher has used the expression, for so long as our natures are depraved, so long perfection of mind will cease.—Wisdom instructs us in the way of nature, say the philosophers ; but how limited an instruction is this, compared with that wisdom, which teaches us to know ourselves !

Philosophic Wisdom is either preceptive or explanative, the former consisting in moral precepts ;—the latter in metaphysical lectures on human nature. Their Wisdom tends to exalt mankind as a dignified being, but the Wisdom that is of God, teaches us, that man is a depraved, fallen, and apostate creature. Socrates places all Wisdom in the distinguishing of good and evil ;—but this at
best

best is no more than foresight and discretion. Constancy is deemed an evidence of Wisdom by some, but fortitude appears the more immediate cause.— Thus having reviewed the philosophic system, shall proceed to observe, that this gift may be divided into natural,—moral,—and spiritual, or revealed Wisdom. It is the mistaken notion of many, that learning constitutes a wise man;—but the absurdity of such a supposition will evidently appear, when we observe, learning does not always correct folly in practice, as the learned themselves are often guilty of the greatest absurdities. It may improve the mind, but it cannot raise that, which nature has never sown. Natural Wisdom may be more fitly expressed under the idea of intellectual discernment, a blessing calculated to promote society and friendship. Many are possessed of this natural Wisdom, who are entire strangers to the politer arts which distinguish the man of learning. This degree of Wisdom renders a man often fitter for
society

society than one who is of a more exalted character; because the former can associate with many, the latter but with few. Moral Wisdom has an immediate reference to our words and actions, which are governed by this rule of discipline;—teaching us to abstain from all manner of evil,—and to regulate our conduct, by the principles of philosophy and reason.—It holds forth honesty as the best policy,—and virtue as the noblest human attainment,—and thus guided by the steady rule of reason; our actions will appear in all their brilliancy. To prevent many evils, and avoid the paths of error,—to insure those things which would terminate to our advantage—to use what we possess, so as neither to injure ourselves or oppress others,—to resist the various temptations constantly presenting themselves to view,—to make pleasure more or less subservient to eventual benefit—to discriminate between ostensible and real excellence—to avoid extremes in any thing—unprejudiced and impartial,—

impartial,—to be guided by the reality,—and not by the appearance of things—to approve deliberately—to censure sparingly—to assent cautiously—to act judiciously,—include the true nature of *moral* Wisdom. Notwithstanding this species of discernment claims our admiration and esteem,—yet what is this when compared to that, which is *spiritual*? Less than the twinkling star to the radiant sun. That sapience which is the immediate effect of revelation,—will on enquiry appear to be the only *true* Wisdom, for the rest are but as shadows to the substance.

Spiritual Wisdom briefly consists in a view of the unsullied perfections of deity,—and a proper discernment of the power and propensities of human nature, or in other words—an acquaintance with self.—All the philosophy of the ancients or moderns can never instruct a man in these important sciences, being derived from the source of Wisdom itself.—Revelation informs us, “ *The world*
“ *by*

“ *by Wisdom—or abstract reason—knew*
“ *not God.*” The divine perfections cannot be viewed through the glass of nature,—since the sun of infinitude totally eclipses it.—To be wise is to be virtuous,—to be virtuous—be humble. By this Wisdom we are taught what the infinite creator of the universe, requires of his creatures,—namely, perfect obedience. This progressive sapience which is supernatural, convinces us of our moral inability to satisfy the demands of unerring justice,—hence, arises a knowledge which teaches us to consider ourselves as depraved creatures, when before we fancied ourselves almost immaculate,—to view ourselves as blind and ignorant, when before in our own imagination, wise,—and that the mind instead of being the source of purity, is the fountain of corruption. What may we suppose to be the effect of this transition? Humility,—and self-abasement.

Since

Since then spiritual Wisdom leads to such an abyss of knowledge, which is productive of such happy effects,—must we not declare it worthy our most diligent pursuit?—All the philosophic systems are bounded by the narrow limits of the present,—but this extends to endless futurity. Here we behold the indissoluble union of reason and revelation,—since that sapience which is the immediate effect of the former, is only circumscribed in its nature,—*not* contrary to,—but improved by the latter. Hence though the benefits are extensive which flow from the Wisdom enjoyed by us as reasonable creatures,—yet that which is derived through the medium of revelation, is of unlimited extent, and boundless duration,—consequently superior.—Learning though arrayed with majesty,—and riches decked with pomp;—must bend with all submission at the feet of Wisdom. 14 NO 63

ESSAY

E S S A Y VI.

O N

V I R T U E.



O N
V I R T U E.

E S S A Y VI.

“ Pleasure, first, succours Virtue ; in return,

“ Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign.”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

RECLINING thought surveys a busy world, and traces every action to its proper source,—considers the noble,—the opulent and great,—the penetrating sage, and the untutored rustic ;—in each discovers trivial charms, unless the offspring, or concomitants of Virtue. Warmed by the diffusive influence of this inspiring, re-animating principle of social life,—domestic pleasures spring from the most uncultivated soil,—and comforts wear a beauteous verdure in the garden of obscurity itself.—Conceive a paradise,—paint to your imagination real bliss, and *there*

G

Virtue

Virtue must preside.—Neither the quadrupeds—the feathered tribe—the inhabitants of the ocean,—nor the reptiles *fortuitously* propagate their several species, or become annihilated through the vicissitudes of time ; * so likewise Virtue amidst every distressing storm and adverse gale, *necessarily* preserves its votaries to the end ; — and reigns triumphant over *all*. Infidelity may shoot its poisoned arrow, — or immorality display its magnetic and attractive powers, — yet even evils must gravitate to the center, and solid Virtue preponderate the whole.

Humanity, in its first original,—being dignified with this sublime principle,—the philosophers, in general, were apt to consider it as an inherent property,—but as man's deviation from his primeval rectitude, has entailed consequences perfectly opposite,—effects of so contrasted

* Though the animal species *individually* does become annihilated by time, yet by *succession* they still exist.

a nature, can be no proof of their assertion.—For the better elucidation of this subject, already too much fettered with party prejudice, and invariably confined by many to a certain line of conduct,—it may be requisite to consider it in two distinct points of view—as it relates to civil society—and, concerns our future happiness.—By blending these distinct ideas, many controversies have arisen,—and some have almost deified,—what others through an equal zeal have utterly anathematized.—Perhaps it may be difficult to determine, which extreme is the most ridiculous.—The many advantages we derive from the practice of Virtue in others, should oblige us, even on the principles of self-interest to practice it ourselves.—Fraud is only a temporary acquisition to the fraudulent,—and an ultimate injury even to their own intentions.—Intemperance is but a convivial bait—that issues more in pain, than pleasure. Virtue then briefly consists in a conformity of temper to the require-

ments of reason,—a practice influenced by prudence—honour—and honesty,—a controul over the passions—and a check to inordinate desire,—it is moderate in its demands—equitable in its decisions—benevolent in its origin—beneficent in its effects,—constant in its prepossessions,—grateful in the midst of benefits,—happy even in adversity.—That serenity of mind which flows from a sense of having *meant* well, and from the undoubted purity of an intention, easily counteracts the assaults of censure, and repels the fruitless efforts of detraction.—There is an internal peace arising from the practice of Virtue, which no vicissitude can utterly destroy, and as it is, in this sense, confined to a sphere with which we are conversant,—we behold the reward, either by enjoyment,—or anticipation.—In matters relating to our conduct among men,—we have, as reasonable creatures, a power of resisting evil,—and many vices which are the effect of habit, are more the result of negligence, than inability

ability to avoid them.—Were it not so, our rational faculties would be entirely useless,—a degradation this, as absurd as its opposite extreme, of ascribing to them a power, they have long since been dispossessed of. — Plato is of opinion, “ That the three parts of the soul have
 “ their peculiar Virtues,—the Virtue of
 “ the rational part is prudence,—that of
 “ the irascible,—fortitude,—that of the
 “ concupiscible,—temperance.” To analyze Virtue,—were to unveil a beauteous form, whose excellence, perhaps, is best described by the deformity of vice,—and whose benefits are so numerous—liberal—and diffusive, that they beggar all description;—but if we consider how the ancient heathens defined this principle, it will lead us to suppose, that in a purer system, it may be considerably extended in its effects; as it derives its influence from a higher source.

Aristotle says, “ There are two principles of Virtue, viz. reason and passion;
 G 3 “ fion;

“ sion; the one commanding, the other
“ obeying; if passion have the mastery,
“ vice takes place; for Virtue depends
“ upon the passions, because they are
“ conversant in pleasure and grief.”
Zeno, the institutor of the Stoic sect,
asserts, “ There are three kinds of Vir-
“ tues: 1. The perfection of any thing,
“ as of a statue. 2. Contemplative Vir-
“ tues, as prudence, justice. 3. Virtues
“ not contemplative, but consequent to
“ these, as health, hope, joy, &c.” It
is an article of the Epicurean philosophy,
“ That prudence alone, includes all
“ Virtue.” Seneca says, “ Virtue is di-
“ vided into two parts, contemplation
“ and action; the one is delivered by
“ institution, the other by admonition.”
The philosophers considered Virtue as
the highest human attainment,—and that
which would secure permanent happi-
ness, — being the knowledge both of
others, and itself. As it is opposed to
vice, there must be a consistency in our
actions as virtuous, without which this
principle

principle ceases. Neither is it sufficient that we give an assent to its doctrines, unless they influence our conduct. Virtue is not confined to one thing in particular, but displays itself in various ways, as in prudence, fortitude, integrity, honour, chastity, and charity. What then we are to understand hereby, is an excellency, whether mental, or actual, in which vice is excluded; and where the motives are produced by Virtue, and directed to virtuous ends.

Virtue also implies goodness or excellency, in things relating to nature or art. The drug, or plant, have their peculiar virtues for which they are esteemed and valued;—so respecting the virtues of the mind, as they appear in different degrees, so are they applauded. Though all Virtues do not appear with equal lustre, in the generality of mankind,—yet they are in themselves coherent and inseparable, nor can vice consistently be gratified, at the expence of Virtue. Seeing it is a governing principle, as well

as a moral excellency; hence it is, that the philosophers connect it with wisdom, since it sways the sceptre of royalty, and claims submission to its will. But such is the depravity of our nature, that vice often rises in rebellion to its authority, and occasions factions and divisions in the soul, which the sages of antiquity compare to a commonwealth.

Virtue consists in moderating the passions, by the rules of prudence and honesty, correcting those things that are irrational, and admitting only those that are moral.—It is described as a sovereign, to give and enact laws; and prudence is concerned in the execution of them. Hence it is, that rational Virtues claim the pre-eminence, as those which are the cause, the others being only the effect.—Prudence being immediately founded upon reason, is a science, — therefore designed to govern our actions, regulate our wills, and direct our judgment.

Some

Some of the Stoics hold Virtue to be self-sufficient to beatitude,—and the philosophers, in general, are of opinion, that it admits of no degrees of increase, or diminution.—Seneca says, “ We are led “ to the understanding of Virtue, by the “ congruity we find in such and such “ actions, to nature and right reason.”—From the several definitions, Plato—Aristotle—and Seneca, have given us of this principle, it appears, how generally circumscribed their notions were respecting it,—and naturally lead us to affix more extensive ideas to its nature, without excluding those, which are the immediate discoveries of reason. Morality, in the manner some describe it,—may be compared to a garment fit only for a peculiar climate,—but those regions which are eternal, require better cloathing to screen us from sovereign vengeance. — Virtue, as it relates to civil society,—is a discreet and equitable rule of conduct,—calculated to guide us through life with credit and reputation.—But what is this
when

when compared with christian Virtue and piety, — which will be perfected hereafter, and which now is only contemplative? — It enjoins morality, — but with far nobler views than the former, since it is actuated by motives of gratitude and love to the divine being, who implants it. — That degree of Virtue which concerns our future happiness, claims no merit from its existence, — for as it derives every essential property from the fountain of undefiled purity, — it ascribes every effect to its *true* cause, — and is productive of undissembled humility. — It adorns the christian character more than wealth or honour, — and a philosopher once justly observed, — “ That Virtue was the only true nobility.” As it is opposed to every vice, — so likewise to any fraud or deceit, — for though it teaches policy, yet it forbids hypocrisy. — Christian Virtue is distinguished from moral, in possessing the good qualities of the latter, — though the latter does not include those of the former. —

mer.—Moral Virtue tends to exalt the creature,—christian Virtue only the Creator. This principle, like the animal and vegetable system, is progressive in its existence — maturity, and perfection. What reason sows and fertilizes,—superior influence renders universally diffusive,—and compleats what the first agent socially began.

Now Virtue, like the stately cedar, is exalted above every tree in Nature's garden,—and though it derives its vegetable life from a humid soil,—yet its intellectual being is the produce of the clearest element.—This principle, as it concerns our future felicity, comprehends all that can be necessary to the attainment of that end,—and uniformly co-operates with reason, in adhering to the infallible dictates of revelation.—Permanency is here invariably secured, since it arises from a two-fold cause,—and the most uninterrupted harmony subsists, between the distinct notes of
what

what we discover,—and what is revealed to us.—The offspring of such wise progenitors as reason and revelation, must necessarily be numerous—liberal—benign, and while social and relative duties are the infancy of Virtue,—unfading bliss issues in the perpetuity of manhood, since age or infirmity never can assail an immortal progeny.

Thus Virtue the concomitant of wisdom, claims our highest admiration,—and the reward of satisfaction that attends it,—should excite us to observe its precepts,

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY VII.

ON

V I C E.



ON
V I C E.

ESSAY VII.

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
“ As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
“ Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
“ We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

POPE.

AT the earliest period of time, when innocence ornamented humanity,—and purity wore an earthly form, extatic blifs reigned with uninterrupted sway, and illuminated every trace of being. — Danger was hitherto unknown,—fear had never shewn its affrighted aspect,—nor distress its armed host. Reflection yielded a succession of increasing joys — thought was the seed time of apparent ease, and revolving moments as the harvest of complete fruition.—Encircled by the chearing rays of unremitting blifs, nature exhilarated the happy pair with continual



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continual delights, and proved in majestic lustre, its author to be divine. — But sad to relate, — the fatal hour arrived when spotless innocence exchanged its beauteous garb, for that of Vice. A midnight gloom pervades the tragic scene, — and shame veils guilt with awe. Horror stalks into the maze of life, and sonorous vengeance is in idea heard, — resentment is the expected messenger of woe, and injured justice the executioner of man. — What conscious innocence had emboldened to enjoy, guilt with acrimony forbids, — and flight proves the fancied refuge of an enfeebled — fallen creature.

Vice here presents us with a dreadful view of the depravity of human nature, — the guilt it has contracted, — and the punishment it has incurred. It has effected an awful separation between the creature, and the Creator, — and occasioned enmity between God and man, strife and contention — envy and malice, —

lice,—pride and revenge,—with diseases and death, every evil in the world it has entailed on the sons of men. Notwithstanding the destructive nature of Vice,—we are too apt to listen to its voice, though conscience declares what will necessarily ensue. How vitiated!—How fallen!—How frail then is humanity, to become a willing slave to Vice,—which threatens, though it may invite!—Its promises are riches—pleasure—or profit,—but these it cannot give.—It invites to happiness,—but woe alone appears,—to riches, but poverty impends,—to profit, but loss, yea dreadful loss ensues.—Thus, at best, it is a deceiver.—The many specious forms which Vice, on almost every occasion can assume,—renders it a more invincible adversary,—for it has a bait constantly suited to every genius and inclination.

Plato says, "Vice is involuntary, for
" no man can pursue ill, as such, with-
" out a prospect of some good, or fear
" of greater evil."—Had humanity re-

H tained

tained its original purity and innocence, it would have appeared formidable;—but our natures being depraved, it is fitly adapted to our will and inclination. — Though many unite in condemning Vice in the theory, their reason testifying against it, — yet how few practically disavow it? The cause hereof is a vitiated nature, — the effect is Vice in the practice. Vice comprises in one single term, every degree of sin, and in every act is opposed to virtue. It is a principle counteracting and opposing every human virtue, — calculated to destroy our peace in the views of comfort, and to procure us misery in the hopes of joy. — It is an insatiable and inordinate principle; — insatiable, inasmuch as the gratification of one passion leads to many, — and the gratification of many leads to more. Inordinate, as it denies all authority, — claiming obedience to its will; and submission to its commands. The servants of Vice are willing slaves to a most cruel tyrant; — but fond of their chains, are happy in a sad delusion.

Vice,

Vice, regardless of its promises, binds its wretched sons with fetters of alluring woe;—while virtue with its gentle hand, conducts us to the plains of bliss.—Its reward is ruin, and its wages death,—hostilities commence between Vice and Reason, when the first prevails;—since passion the promoter, is itself irrational.

This principle is the common enemy of nature,—though we are naturally inclined to it. Every faculty of the mind—the whole human system is immediately affected by its influence,—and it is their mutual interest to resist its force, and withstand its flattering charms,—but so blinded are we to our common welfare, and so subtle is this dangerous foe, that he meets with little opposition. Instead of making the smallest efforts to counteract the latent and ruinous purposes of Vice,—we are constantly extenuating—palliating,—and sometimes vindicating its baneful exertions. Under the idea of *liberality of sentiment*, we become sceptical and unbelieving—under the veil of

refinement, dissipated—prophane,—in the garb of *honour*, we assimilate to the ferocity of the savage,—in the mask of politeness, hypocritical—under the auspices of refinement, indulge a levity of manners—with the plea of *modest assurance*—indelicate, amazonian,—and in the livery of custom,—fashionably abandoned.

If Vices, by the usurped authority of the vicious, can be transformed into virtues,—and immoralities justified on the score of necessity, we cannot long hesitate in determining wherefore they are so generally practised.—There is no instance in which man acts so contrary to his own interest, as in the performance of evil, for whatever pleasure may be derived from a temporary gratification,—it invariably reverts injuriously to himself.—Though facts preach so loudly to us the consequences of Vice, and every day presents us with some testimony of its destructive influence,—though it robs us of almost every comfort,—our peace of mind,—reputation,—friends,—though it

it annihilates our most valuable enjoyments, and renders our animal system as a distempered prison,—though it enervates the vigour of youth, and entails the infirmities of age,—though it threatens present, and future misery,—yet we blindly pursue it.—If we are thus infatuated in the slavery of Vice,—it must indisputably arise from an innate depravity of mind, that surmounts even the dictates of reason, or the still more powerful voice of self-interest.

Vice acquired by our first parents, is hereditary, — constitutional, and transmitted to their whole posterity. The contenders for human dignity, deny this glaring truth,—but the vitiosity of men and manners in general, are a sufficient testimony.—Far greater than corporeal ruin, is produced by it, since it endangers every mental power; and the soul itself. Not satisfied with the wrecks of plunder and devastation in the human frame, it extends its poisonous darts unto the seat of life; and that which was

formed for blisful immortality, it threatens with eternal woe.

Vice is the friend of death, and the sister of destruction; the former it has insured, the latter it desires. It is distinguished from virtue, as the former is the path to misery, the latter the road to happiness. Vice admits of degrees, and though an universal evil, not of equal prevalence. Were it to reign triumphant over the mental shore, and claim unlimited domain, man would exceed the beast, and brutality might claim the preference. The whole five senses become impaired by it, and ruin effected through the whole natural system. The sight, or understanding is blinded to every sense of virtue,—the hearing deaf to the voice of reason, or prudence;—the smelling insensible of the loathsome nature of Vice;—the taste nauseated with the fruits of virtue, so as to loath and abhor it;—and the feeling benumbed by the destroying winter of sin.

Thus

Thus Vice threatens every faculty of soul and body with destruction. Happiness and contentment afford no asylum—peace and comfort no retreat;—ruin sounds the dread alarm, and the shattered building falls a wretched victim. Beauty now becomes deformed,—wisdom, foolishness,—and riches,—poverty. It frequently effects these changes.

Original, as well as actual guilt, is included in the present theme,—the former some deny, the latter all confess.—Reason proves them true, and revelation now confirms it.—A man must be apprized of danger, before he seeks relief.—Hence so many are easy in the slavery of Vice, since they are not apprehensive of their danger. Philosophers would refer us to reason, as a warning, but Vice over-rules reason, and drowns it in the depths of madness. Here morality is at a stand, and its limits finish;—it condemns,—dehorts, and reproves;—but cannot change.—Nature being depraved, cannot be changed by nature.—

This is a rational paradox. There must be something supernatural to change nature, since superiority of power is required to effect a natural purpose.—Learning, says the rationalist, is an acquisition; will not that effect the design? Prudence is a rational virtue, seated in the mind; will not that produce the change? The negative reasonably replies.—According to the philosophic notions, Vice cannot exist in the soul of man, or in the rational part, which they call the mind, because nature opposes it. Nature itself being depraved, assents to,—instead of opposing Vice.—The mind itself is vitiated, consequently reason alone cannot eradicate this ingrafted evil.

Vice, so far as it prevails, has dominion over reason, though the conquest is not compleat. Prudence yields to Vice, since nature is itself inclined thereunto. Every human refuge failing, whither must offenders seek for pardon? Revelation, far superior to all other means

means of knowledge, directs the enquiring penitent to a medium, in which every divine attribute shines with equal lustre. —Justice and mercy embrace each other, and are mutually exalted. The offender is pronounced righteous, and the offended Deity reconciled. Here human reason is confounded.—Nature teaches moral obedience, though incapacitated for the duty. Reason seeks for human satisfaction, but nature cannot grant it.

Omnipotence surmounts these difficulties, and with supernatural wisdom provides a way, in which Vice can be atoned for, and the Almighty just.—To the astonishment of all ages — and the confusion of the unbelieving world, we are presented in the sacred pages of revelation, with a view of perfect equity and consummate mercy,—uniting in one act of divine munificence.—Enemies become the favourites of heaven,— and rebels the heirs of an eternal inheritance. — The offended is the propitiatory sacrifice for offenders,—and man, who had

no

no claim to favour, enjoys it uninterruptedly. Do *we* boast of sympathy, or compassion? — Is benevolence in any wise the characteristic of man? Does the distress of others assail our most refined feelings? Can we prefer the interest — the pleasure — the happiness of others to our own? If a spark of philanthropy dwells in our breast, — what a diffusive flame of boundless compassion has appeared, in the restoration of a ruined world! — Every benefit we derive in common — all that we can expect in future, — arises *solely* from this source of ultimate felicity. — While virtue holds forth every social blessing, — Vice, every impending evil, — may infinite wisdom direct our choice, — that while we pursue the one, — avoid the other!

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY VIII.

ON

PRUDENCE.



ON
PRUDENCE.

ESSAY VIII.

“ Virtus est, vitium fugere; et sapientia prima,
“ stultitia caruisse.”

HORACE.

“ Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento, huc
“ illuc impellitur.

“ Quod cavere possis, stultum admittere est.”

TERENCE.

REASON, the moral guide of nature, ranks Prudence with her highest virtues;—learning the ornament of humanity, admires its precepts. Divested of this moral excellency, every created good would fail,—and a multiplicity of mercies increase our misery.—Prudence implies a proper use of things, forbidding the abuse of them. Man, who was formed for society, destitute of this virtue, would be a brute;—and instead of communicating good to others, would be the common pest of nature.—

There

There is no station in life,—no age, rank, or degree, but mutually and universally stand in need of its happy influence. — Riches, without Prudence, will soon dwindle into poverty;—wisdom will sink into folly;—learning will betray ignorance and simplicity;—honour will reduce to shame; ambition will occasion contempt; industry will be useless; and courage, without Prudence, is temerity and rashness.—From the most exalted, to the most menial sphere of life,—there is a necessity for the exercise of this virtue. The monarch, who sways the regal sceptre with Prudence, will deter his enemies, and acquire friends. The statesman, who with Prudence holds the reins of government, is the subject of real patriotism. —Valour, without Prudence, in a general, avails but little. It diffuses its salubrious effects for universal good;—and in proportion as it reigns, success attends. Certain it is, that exceptions are found to this general rule; but as certain, that imprudence to the unhappy subjects

subjects seldom issues in their good. Prudence is the road to pleasure, and the path of happiness. This virtue is opposed to folly, as well as vice, nor can it exist where either reigns.—It is said to include all virtue,—and as it is a rational principle, productive of universal benefit, the assertion appears just. It is so peculiarly comprehensive, that there is scarce a moral excellency, or temporal benefit, in which Prudence is not included. Private, — domestic, — and civil Prudence are often united,—though various in their significance. By private Prudence, I mean, an internal knowledge of our state and genius,—of the gifts of nature, and of the powers mental, intellectual, and corporeal bestowed.

The result of this knowledge is an accommodation of our actions to the power given;—of our undertakings to the genius bestowed.—Reason being the guide, Prudence follows,—and is actuated by, upon, and with rational principles. Nature

ture will manifest its powers, and expose its failings, inasmuch as every man is endued with the faculties of reason; — Prudence discerning them, acts accordingly.

This may serve to convince us, that this virtue is a great promoter of contentment, since it shews us our desires should not extend beyond our abilities. Every man should act according to his circumstances, whether affluent, or otherwise; — and be concerned not to exceed those limits. A prudent man will appear consistently, — if debased, not to affect grandeur, if exalted, not to affect fervility. He will be likewise concerned to maintain good order and decorum in his family, — to set a good example, and to behave in all things with becoming decency. — Prudence will direct persons when to speak, and when to be silent; and, to observe every requisite necessary in the rules of sound policy and discretion. It teaches men to chuse those things which are most for their real benefit; and

and by reason of this happy faculty of distinguishing good from evil, it is allied to wisdom. Thus private Prudence immediately respects those concerns, in which the individual safety is particularly included.

Domestic Prudence is either parental, — conjugal, — dominative, or possessive ; — that which relates to the first character, briefly consists in the union of good example and precepts, — correction and instruction ; — that of the second, in mutual interests and uninterrupted harmony. Dominative Prudence, principally respects our conduct to inferiors and dependants. — Nothing is a greater mark of ignorance, than for men to assume a lofty and imperious air towards those, whom providence has placed in a sphere below them. The prudent man will act with becoming tenderness, — knowing that distinctions are but mortal titles. Prudence directs to the medium, either extreme, is folly. Lastly, that Prudence which relates to our possessions,

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fions,

sions, if attended to, and in exercise, will keep us from the fear of want, or the dread of envy. The general idea of Prudence, that natural conception affords, is in a few words, an *universal limit*. Nature has implanted in mankind, in general, a thirst for pleasure, which being seated in the passions, would without this, become predominant and invincible. Hence I am led to my last division, civil Prudence. Ambition often prompts, when Prudence will forbid.—Exalted and public stations of life, are not suited to every capacity ;—therefore civil Prudence signifies, that men should not accept of employments, which nature has not fitted them for. Let the contemplative apply to study, the courageous to war, — and the robust to exercise.

We find this virtue is a general boundary to natural desires, in all stations and degrees of life. These reflections are pregnant with reproof of the grand philosophic error of human dignity, and moral suasion ;—the former

former appearing groundless, since Prudence, though a rational virtue, does not controul nature to its will, which evidently demonstrates its natural deficiency, and therefore lessens or derogates, from the claim to dignity. Moral suasion as a precept fails, since the foundation, nature, is debilitated by its original depravity. Prudence, as a virtue, opposes every reigning passion that is contrary to its dictates;—but though it may disclaim, it cannot prevent,—though it may abhor,—yet it cannot destroy. Here human Prudence is defective.—Many are theoretically convinced, that vice is contrary to this discretionary rule, but few are practically enabled to resist it, on this account. What, says the rationalist, if human Prudence will not restrain, what will? The scripture rationalist replies,—Nature cannot assist nature, where both are mutually depraved. Since then the calamity is universal,—co-eval,—and co-existent, as to its originality,—whither must we seek relief? I have already shewn, that

reason is unequal to the task, because depraved.

Prudence then being founded upon knowledge, we should seek it alone from that power that first implants it.—The admirable Mr. LOCKE, in his Essay on human Understanding says, “When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success.” By this observation, he demonstrates knowledge the cause,—and Prudence the effect.—There is a kind of mistaken Prudence, falsely imputed to this virtue;—though allied both to vice and folly. To relate minutely its various manifestations, would exceed my present design, to an unintended prolixity;—but meanness, in trivial concerns, is one way,—partial œconomy another,—and avarice, with affluence, a third.—This mistaken Prudence is an imprudent imitation of a virtue, which the light of reason will prove defective. To return to my subject, we find, since this virtue is founded on knowledge, it forbids our wandering

wandering beyond those limits ;—idea bewilders, knowledge guides. “The understanding and the will, says the ingenious LOCKE, are two faculties of the mind.” Such then is the contrariety of our nature, that these faculties are often in opposition to each other,—the understanding approving, what the will rejects ;—and the will approving what the understanding would condemn. This mental division manifests the imperfection of our nature acquired by guilt,—which has impaired the whole natural system ; and occasioned universal anarchy. This fatal discord, Prudence will itself demonstrate, since the understanding admires the virtue, when the will abhors the practice. Prudence, as a relative virtue, enjoins its precepts for reciprocal and universal benefit. The choice, or otherwise the will, if unrestrained by this regulating principle, will plunge into every evil ; and leap though on the precipice of destruction. Reason sufficiently denotes this moral virtue as a proper guide ;—but nature is blind

unto its charms ; and deaf to its intreaties. Prudence, though so requisite in our secular concerns, and a necessary ingredient in the execution of purposes,—yet with respect unto futurity, it is altogether vain. Infinitude alone can effect an infinite concern,—and a supernatural power only can effect a supernatural purpose. The light of reason here leaves us uninformed.—Under the notion of a supposed conformity to the rules of Prudence,—some have denied whatever they could not clearly comprehend. Hence the Deists, by avoiding credulity, imagine they act under the immediate auspices of a virtue that is allied to wisdom.

Again, on principles of Prudence we may argue thus ; the great first cause that formed the powers of human intellect, and even reason itself, to suppose capable of error, is irrational ;—if then this divine original hath revealed his will to man, however far above our reason,—his revelation, as given by unerring wisdom, must be just and good. It
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is prostituting our reason, to deny these demonstrable certainties. Since Prudence is the practice of wisdom, it will direct our views, our hopes, our joys, to those things conducive for our good. To happiness, — to joy, — to peace and comfort, — Prudence is the wise conductor.

14 NO 63

E S S A Y IX.

O N

TEMPERANCE.



ON TEMPERANCE.

ESSAY IX.

“Non possidentem multa vocaveris rectè beatum.

“Rectius occupat nomen beati, qui deorum

“Muneribus sapienter uti.”

HORACE, *Lib. iv. Ode ix.*

NATURE, extensive in its desires, needs a rational restraint,—in order to preserve decency and decorum.—So boundless in its aims, and vast in its pursuits, is the mind of man, that some limit is absolutely necessary. — Society would be wholly set aside, and anarchy alone prevail, did not Temperance sway its golden sceptre, and moderate our desires and inclinations. The philosophers, sensible of the comfort arising from the due observance of this rule, were pleased to rank it among their highest virtues. Certain it is, from nature and right reason, that the mental and corporeal benefit of mankind is
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herein essentially concerned. It is mentioned, concerning Socrates, that he was so temperate, that in all the plagues of Athens, he alone escaped. Passion being irrational, Temperance, as rational, moderates. Present enjoyment, and future oblivion, are great opposers of this virtue;—and the vague idea of fruition is adduced to compensate for all evil consequences. The mistaken notions we in general form of pleasure, and our anticipations of future benefit, are too immoderate, to answer our expectations;—the former proves itself allied to sorrow,—and the latter often issues in disappointment.

Temperance is a medium in all things, and opposed to extremes in any thing. To treat of this virtue more particularly, shall include the following things:—Sobriety opposed to inebriation and gluttony,—continence to lust,—mildness to anger,—modesty to presumption,—mediocrity between hope and despair,—moderation in opposition to extremes.—

Sobriety

Sobriety is doubtless commendable in all,—though despised by many. Nothing is a greater disgrace to humanity than intemperance and excess, since they impair our reason, and reduce mankind to a level with the brute, not knowing when nature is satisfied. It is also an abuse of the goodness of Providence, that so plentifully supplies our wants. Exclusive of the evil and wickedness of excess,—it is an essential injury to our bodies, and highly destructive of our health and comfort. It unfits for all society,—and entails numerous diseases.—Sobriety then is the best policy, both for our corporeal and mental interest;—for want of the due observance of this moral rule of conduct, sense,—learning,—and abilities are too often immersed in brutal stupidity, and prostituted to the vilest purposes. Man, endued with the faculties of reason, when indulging these base inclinations, is lost to every sense of virtue, that his natural faculties would promote. Sobriety then is political,—beneficial,—and laudable.

Continence,

134 ON TEMPERANCE.

Continence, by the philosophers, is esteemed a peculiar virtue; and Chastity, no doubt, is highly commendable;—but with respect unto the lawful bonds of the conjugal union, society is more particularly benefited;—nor can Celibacy, merely on the principles of abstinence, be considered as a virtue. The solution of this principle, depending greatly on circumstances, and those circumstances in all respects various,—any further enlargement would be totally unnecessary.

Mildness, in opposition to anger, must be allowed a governing principle, well worthy of our notice and regard. — Anger is a striking proof of the veracity and certainty of original depravity, — since it displays itself in the earliest periods of life, before we are capable of utterance, or verbal expression. The dispositions of men are as various as their persons;—and their rational faculties equally diversified. — This shews the sovereignty of Deity. — Anger is passion unrestrained; — mildness is a restraint
upon

upon passion;—mildness is the language of reason,—and candour is nearly allied. Anger is allied to madness,—while mildness is the friend of wisdom;—reason is absent while anger reigns;—but where mildness claims the sceptre, reason then returns.

Modesty comes next in course,—and here we view the ornament of nature in its choicest robes. This virtue is peculiar to women,—and no less an ornament, than an honour. This, as well as many other virtues, is founded on knowledge,—and *that* a knowledge of ourselves.

The general reasons that can be assigned for the exercise of this amiable qualification, are self-diffidence,—supposed comparative meanness,—and natural reservedness, arising from a proper knowledge of ourselves.—We never see a person lost to every sense of modesty, and presuming with undaunted boldness,—but we readily impute it to ignorance. It is wrong to imagine, that
modesty

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modesty arises from shame,—since shame only can arise from guilt. Modesty is a proper restraint on our conduct, and a faithful guide in our deportment;—yet, notwithstanding its virtual excellency, it is by some despised, by others condemned. As it is opposed to ambition, it is a check on our desires. To the aspiring after honour, riches, and the like;—if endued with modesty, it will be found a powerful preventive,—and rather a hindrance, than aid. In the estimation of those whose favour is worth our seeking,—modesty is no small recommendation;—modesty and merit frequently unite, and though the former may procrastinate, the latter will procure. Another benefit arising from this disposition is,—a deliverance from the fear or danger of abasement, since modesty must be noticed before it will aspire,—and presumption often calls aloud for notice, when contempt alone will frown;—so that a modest man is certain of never being abased, if he is not exalted.

Mediocrity,

Mediocrity, between hope and despair, comes next under consideration.—Hope is a prospect of something desired, though not possessed. — Despair is a total annihilation of the former,—and a principle of internal wretchedness arising from a criminal incredulity. Here then we have in view the happy medium. Contentment must be the natural effect of this consolatory temper. Reason, Epicurus tells us, will effect these things, and it is probable in some respects it may; but there have been instances, wherein even that has failed. — A state of mediocrity, between hope and despair, is desirable, from the following consideration, namely, that it is a deliverance from the fear of disappointment, — or the danger of discontent. It is, in short, an inward solace or comfort that exceeds in intrinsic value all the treasures of the East. But there is a consolation derived from a higher source,—and founded on a nobler basis, even revelation itself, and the words of eternal truth,—which the world can neither give nor take away.

K

Moderation,

Moderation, in opposition to extremes, now presents itself to view. It may justly be said to be the refinement of wisdom,—the quintessence of policy, the ornament of truth,—the laurels of unequalled honour,—the throne of justice,—and the seat of mercy. So unparalleled is the extent of this virtue, that there is scarcely any thing existing to which it may not be recommended.—It is an universal medium.—A moderate prince shines with undiminished lustre; a moderate statesman guides the helm of government with wisdom and discretion;—a moderate general shews mercy more than vengeance. In our principles, whether religious or political,—moderation is certainly commendable. Extremes in matters of religion, though in this respect revelation is the only limit, are enthusiastic and vain, bordering more on fancy, than truth. Moderation in the political principles of many, would be a very necessary and useful ingredient. It is for want of this virtue, that so many run such ridiculous lengths into folly

folly and extreme notions. The old Latin proverb, *In medio tuitiffimé ibis*, is a juſt remark on the folly of extremes in any thing. Every ſentiment extant, void of moderation, is riſking both truth and juſtice. A man who is moderate in his deſires, is in the way of ſafety, while a contraſted character conſtantly expoſes itſelf to danger. Moderation in dreſs, is far more ornamental than extremes;—the former is conſiſtent with decency, — the latter is foppery and ef-feminacy. Moderation in our pleaſures, is timing them to advantage,—whereas the extreme would iſſue in ruin. So comprehensive is this moſt rational virtue, that it equals the force of reaſon to adviſe, or power to execute. Finally, it is a rational, — univerſal, and beneficial reſtraint, on the obſtreperous ſteed of deſire and inclination. Thus Temperance includes in it every thing, that can render our lives comfortable and happy. The voice of reaſon goes a great way, but the voice of revelation goes ſtill farther. — Temperance needs power in-

finite to moderate every natural inclination, and infinite protection and guidance is promised to those who seek it alone from the original of power itself. Temperance, so extensive in its benefits, so universally beneficent, claims our steadiest regard, — and our highest admiration.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

E S S A Y X.

O N

FORTITUDE.

K 3



O N

FORTITUDE.

ESSAY X.

—— “ Velis tantummodo quæ tua virtus
“ Expugnabis; et est qui vinci possit eoque
“ Difficiles aditus primos habet.
—— “ Nil finè magno
“ Vit a labore dedit mortalibus.
—— “ Verùm ambitiosus et audax.”

HORACE.

“ Entelle, heroum quondam fortissime frustra,
“ Tantane tam patiens nullo certamine tolli
“ Dona fines?”

VIRG. *Æn. Lib. ii.*

ADVERSITY, with all its dire attendants, claims in part dominion over man, — once formed for undiminished joy; — but forfeited by sin. Every atom of creation conspired to felicitate ungrateful man, till prompted by the solicitations of vice, he rejected the command of heaven, and arraigned the wisdom of even God himself. — Offended majesty

then denounced a curse, entailing woe upon the race of Adam. This was the origin of the numerous afflictions incidental to this mortal life; hence mortality commenced;—from this æra there appears then, to have been a necessity for—Fortitude.—Under the various terms of magnanimity,—courage,—and strength, is this virtue considered; since it severally includes them, and was held in the greatest repute by the philosophers in general, though but few of them reduced it into practice, which we shall easily account for, in the sequel. Epicurus says, “Fortitude is not innate, but acquired “by reason;” serving to demonstrate, that by a certain rule of action, a man may abolish the dread or fear of *any* thing. Reason, when in its fullest exercise, meets with insurmountable difficulties, which cannot be overcome by reason. There are three things which according to the opinion of philosophers, Fortitude dispels; the fear of death,—corporeal pain,—and discontent of mind. Their manner of dispelling the fear of death

death is by saying, it does not concern us at all, for death is a privation of sense, and consequently in vain threatens pain, when the patient is no more. Why, say they, should we fear dissolution or non-existence? For when that comes, we shall have no faculty left whereby to know that it is an evil. With respect unto corporeal pain, they comfort themselves thus; — if violent, it will quickly either abate, or be finished by death; — if lasting, it will be gentler, and have intervals of ease; for shortness atones for greatness, and remissness for length. The last thing mentioned was discontent of mind. The way, say they, to make life happy, is to expel opinions, which are the only disturbers of the mind; — and the way to expel opinions, is to arm the mind against Fortune, for that the external causes of affliction and discontent are not our goods, but the goods of Fortune, which come and go as Fortune pleases.

This

This is genuine philosophic Fortitude, which may be compared to an imprudent general, contending with an armed foe, though himself unarmed. So defenceless nature is here exhorted to contend with the majesty of heaven, though armed with nothing more than the broken spear of reason.—Fortitude, the armour of the mind, repulses fear with all its grim assailants, and fixed upon the tower of natural strength, repels its fiery darts. This is literally descriptive of this heroic virtue, which fills the mind with intrepidity incredible. Certain it is, that respecting many persons this virtue is innate, — natural, — and originating with their existence; nor do I think it is possible for any man to acquire Fortitude by reason, unless his natural disposition is magnanimous.—Fortitude may be compared to a city besieged on every side, but defending itself on the bulwark of hope and confidence; till by playing the whole artillery of magnanimity and perseverance, they oblige the enemy to
raise

raise the siege. Fortitude is a self-existent,—self-determinate, and executive virtue; it is self-existent,—inasmuch as it reigns separately and universally in the recipient; it is self-determinate,—since it decides invariably and definitively;—it is executive, as it surmounts all obstacles,—and resolutely reduces into practice what it has determined in the judgment.—In this respect it is a practical virtue. Fortitude, as a mental blessing, is the servant of the will; the will forms, conceives, desires,—and Fortitude both decrees and executes.

In this view we may consider this virtue as the former of resolutions, or the agent of the mind;—and here I cannot pass over a beautiful description of the frailty and mutability of all human resolutions, by that ancient author, Sir WILLIAM CORNWALLIS. “Methinks I am
 “strong, and able to encounter any affliction, but hardly have my thoughts
 “made an end of this gallant discourse,
 “but in comes a wife, or a friend, at
 “whose

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“ whose sight my armour of defence is
 “ broken, and I could weep with them
 “ or be content to laugh at their trivial
 “ sports.”—Thus Fortitude has to en-
 counter with the affections, internal—as
 well as external trials. Immersed in the
 depths of trouble,—wading in the sea of
 affliction,—is the exercise and probation
 of this virtue. Aristotle says, “ For-
 “ titude is a habit between boldness and
 “ fear.”—Diogenes says, “ The noblest
 “ men are those who condemn wealth,
 “ glory and pleasure, and at the same
 “ time have the mastery over poverty,
 “ ignominy, pain, and death.”—It was
 the opinion of Zeno, a Stoic philoso-
 pher, “ That Fortitude comprehends
 “ steadfastness in the way of right reason,
 “ and true judgment, readiness to trust,
 “ magnanimity, invincible courage, and
 “ perseverance in the proposed course.”
 According to the received opinion of the
 philosophers concerning this virtue, it is
 wholly opposed to fear.

Since

Since fear then is the dire opponent,—a bare speculative knowledge will be ineffectual,—and the mere existence of Fortitude in theory, will be fruitless and vain.—How is Fortitude to be known? In danger, affliction, and trouble.—If then it is only to be acquired by reason, how can it be said to exist, when and where reason ceases? For we know danger frequently deprives us of reason, and yet Fortitude appears. It may then be said to co-operate with, and increase, though not acquired by reason.—Magnanimity and courage are the gifts of heaven, and the dispositions of the mind. Fortitude appears in the earliest periods of life, before reason can be supposed mature. Temerity and rashness claim no share in this heroic virtue, as diametrically opposite to the dictates of reason, or prudence. Aristotle deems this an irrational virtue, but this rule admits of many circumstantial exceptions, for Fortitude in itself is permanent and durable, fixed on a solid basis, actuated by prudence, and promoted by temperance,
 so

so that it is in connection with the preceding virtues. As Fortitude is conversant with trouble and affliction, it seldom shews itself but on those occasions,—and then, like an Alexander, conquers, till sorrow is swallowed up in joy. If we consider the word derivatively, and dissect its literal meaning from its original term, we must include strength, whether natural, or acquired.

Natural habitual strength of body, is indisputably a great promoter of this virtue, where it has an existence;—but it is not the producing cause, for that, we must implore the universal Creator of all things; the great first cause of causes;—and as to acquired strength, it will but in part effect a purpose. Fortitude must be allied to patience, or its blessings cease. Sir WILLIAM CORNWALLIS says,
 “ When Fortitude feels oppression, and
 “ an impossibility of being victorious, to
 “ avoid rashness, desperation, and fury.
 “ she turneth to patience, which defends
 “ her from being overcome, though
 “ vanquished.”—

“vanquished.”—Hence we see Fortitude is not merely a resistance, but an endurance of evil;—nor is it either safe or proper always to take up arms of opposition, especially when contending with a mighty foe. In various trials and afflictions, Fortitude chiefly consists in enduring them patiently; to contend would be madness;—to endure, is wisdom. As Fortitude and patience seem inseparably connected, it may be deemed a contemplative virtue, that exalts on the pinnacle of hope, when on the brink of danger.—Fortitude is the progenitor of hope, and patience is the offspring of both. Fortitude while it dissipates fear, guards against presumption,—the latter of which is only the counterfeit of this virtue, and an effect of arrogance and impiety;—whereas this heroic invariable privilege is founded on justice and piety.—Fortitude engaged in a bad cause, is rather trampling on the armour of vindictive equity, than repelling the assailants from the fortress of truth and honour.

Having

Having shewn the nature,—origin, and extent of moral or natural Fortitude, which I conceive to be a mental virtue, both determinate and executive,—must observe, that an ill-founded and presuming contempt of danger, rather atheistical, than rational,—is not *in proprio nomine*, intrinsic Fortitude. Intoxication of the senses,—prostitution of the faculties, self-arrogance and importance, producing a mistaken obduracy, falsely called Fortitude,—is an irrational imitation of a virtue which is proved by its effects.—As moral Fortitude dispels every gleam of fear, its support is rational, as its perseverance is abiding. Finally, Fortitude, magnanimity, and courage, unitedly evidence enlargement of mind,—refinement of thought,—sublimity of conception, and exalted ideas of nature and providence,—by banishing a servile dread, and displaying a becoming confidence.—Notwithstanding the peculiar lustre with which this virtue appears, even in the spotted robe of nature, yet, when compared with Christian Fortitude,

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it is altogether vain. — Previous to the discussion of this exalted theme, I must shew, that the philosophers, though possessed of rational notions of Fortitude, yet were incapable of practically receiving what they had imbibed only in theory. I shall introduce only two instances to prove this.

Seneca, when ordained by the command of Nero to be bled to death, not possessed of *real* Fortitude sufficient to sustain affliction, pain, and death, had recourse to poison, to hasten his weary moments to a wished for period. This is *one* instance of philosophic Fortitude;—the other is that of Socrates, who poisoned himself previous to his execution.—Thus, with all *their* Fortitude, they could not face the king of terrors, but with dread and fear.—Not so does Christian Fortitude instruct its votaries.—It is founded on the eternal purpose of omnipotence, and the words of unerring wisdom;—it teaches men not to put their confidence in princes, but in God alone.—

L

In

In the Apostolic ages, we have great instances of Christian Fortitude, — of men glorying in persecution, — triumphing in death, — rejoicing in tribulation, — and joyful even in extreme pain. The pious Martyrs, who suffered in the glorious cause of Protestantism, are wonderful proofs of the power — veracity, — and reason, — of religion and revelation. When their bodies were burning in the flames, their hearts were rejoicing in their Maker, — and their tongues employed in his praise for their support. When the tender eye of pity must have forced a commiserating tear, even from the impenetrable Stoic, they proclaimed the instrument of death to be as a bed of roses. This is Fortitude indeed! — Christian Fortitude enables men to triumph in the hour of death — to rejoice in the views of eternity. Hence it is self-evident that in this mortal state, trouble will attend us; “*In the world ye shall have tribulation.*” But what encouragement does Christian Fortitude afford? — “*But in me ye shall have peace.*”

In

In whom, says the enquiring Sceptic? Furnished with information from the only source of knowledge, we reply,—in the infinite mercy of God in Christ, permanent peace is alone to be found.—Let the Deist, who may make large pretensions to reason answer, whether philosophic, or Christian Fortitude is most rational? The former satisfies for the present, and deludes in the end;—the latter satisfies both in present and future,—at present by hope—and in future by enjoyment. Philosophic Fortitude can administer comfort no further than the present, it cannot lead our views to futurity with pleasure;—but Christian Fortitude fills the mind with that joy, which the world, that is, the generality of mankind, knows nothing of. Nor will the antidotes against trouble, made use of by the Heathens, afford common support under distresses,—far less are they capable of filling the mind with a blessed prospect in futurity. On the principles of reason itself then, the Deists are refuted,—and revelation reigns victorious,—matchless,—and superlatively

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excellent above all other means of knowledge. The necessity of Fortitude shews, that the road to future happiness, is covered with the thorns and briars of affliction, and nothing less than supernatural power can remove them.—The necessity, excellency, and comfort of Fortitude, demonstrates the insufficiency of human reason;—and that the light of nature darkens our conceptions, and would lead us into error and delusion.—Fortitude, invested with the armour of eternal truth, will reign victorious and triumphant.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XI.

ON

JUSTICE.

L 3



ON
J U S T I C E.
E S S A Y XI.

——— "At pueri ludentes, Rex eris, aiunt,
"Si rectè facies.

————— "Vir bonus est quis?
"Qui consulta patrum, qui leges, juraque servat."
HORACE.

"Jus summum sæpè summa est Malitia."
TERENCE.

POWER, the sovereign of nature, unrestrained by law, reigns arbitrary and despotic;—but Justice immutably decrees a proper limit. Where Justice reigns, success may be expected;—but where oppression sways its sceptre, destruction will attend. Subordination and subjection,—government and discipline, have ever been found both politic and necessary. As law is the very essence of liberty, so without it, there is no security of property;—and claim, or natural right, is founded on law and equity.

L 4

equity. Society, or mutual harmony and intercourse, can no longer be supported, than while Justice is adhered to;—and every act of injustice tends to lessen public confidence, and establish jealousy and suspicion. Justice is a virtue so comprehensive, that it includes every pious and generous act, and excludes every species of fraud, oppression, or deceit;—it regulates our actions by the noblest of motives, and for virtuous ends.—Mankind would be reduced into accumulating woes, did equity not preside over the course of civil,—political,—and commercial matters.

Justice, from its derivation, signifies right, — and as various things are included in that single term, we may discuss them more particularly under the following divisions of natural, acquired, and hereditary right. Natural right being derived solely from a natural claim, pre-supposes a natural evidence, as it is a natural gift. Every man may be said to have a natural right to the
privileges

privileges and advantages of the nation where he is born, inasmuch as he is subject to its laws, whether penal, or beneficial. This doctrine is but reasonable, for the same argument that supports subjection, confirms protection; since they are reciprocal benefits.—But natural right when contended for, to an unlimited extent, is launching forth into error and delusion. Man's natural right to *any* of the blessings of Providence is false,—since as a fallen and dependent creature, he can have *no* claim on the Creator, but must acknowledge all that he receives to be the fruit and effect of *sovereign mercy*. Natural right then, is a common blessing, agreed upon by a concurrence of votes to make men live securely, and this every man *naturally* desires. Thus natural right includes in itself preservation, and every social privilege.—The supreme governor of the universe, having created man to be, as one expresses it, the sovereign lord of the creation, he hath graciously subjected all things to his will and command
among

among the brute creation, by implanting in them the fear of man. All things thus conspiring for the benefit of mankind,—and as expectants of these blessings,—we derived what is called natural right. — Thus the claim ceases as the privilege is derived. Acquired right immediately respects a legal claim, either by gift or purchase, and as this can only be determined by law,—Justice here must necessarily preside. This is distinguished from the former, since it is obtained, not derived, either by an adequate consideration, — a deed, or bequest. Acquired right is a legal investiture, or indemnification,—consigned to the power of the possessor. Hereditary right is consanguineal, or resulting from affinity, or kindred, as of a son to a father. This right is an union of contingencies, not always founded on Justice,—but frequently dependent on the will of the donor, or the conduct,—situation,—and circumstance of the recipient. Thus natural,—acquired,—and hereditary right, should be mutually founded on Justice.—

This

This virtue is not merely nominal, but actual, some indeed there are, that greatly consist in the estimation; as for instance, what some would call honour, others would deem disgrace;—what some would suppose pleasure—others pain;—what some would imagine profit, others loss. Not thus uncertainly does Justice reign, since it is built on the rock of truth. It is actual, invariable,—and definitive;—in all respects consistent; and it admits of no diminution, or increase,—exaggeration, or extenuation.

It is likewise vindictive;—hence generally described as armed with all the powers of wrath and vengeance, against all who dare trespass on its sacred borders. None ever violated its stern command, but suffered either in body or mind. Justice is its own reward, even the reward of a good conscience,—than which no moral blessing can be greater. Though law and Justice should inseparably unite, yet too often they are divided; and custom prevails, when Justice

tice only should be obeyed.—Justice is as highly distinguished for its impartiality, as for any other moral excellency, since it is no respecter of persons. Justice knows no prerogative that destroys the comfort or safety of individuals; it is as much a restraint on power, as the abuse of it. As to the origin of this virtue, it is so ancient, that it has had an existence from the beginning of time, or the first institution of civil society.—Justice is as amiably beneficent, as impartially equitable, being a friend to the distressed, and the redresser of grievances. “Justice, says Epicurus, is
 “ a relative virtue, which gives to every
 “ one his own, and screens every one
 “ from injury, being the common tie
 “ of all societies.” It is a virtue of singular penetration and discernment, since there belongs to it a power of discerning truth from error, and penetrating into the secret and covered actions of men. Hence it appears, that after every species of fraud or deception,
 Justice

Justice will prove itself to be the best policy.

Sir William Cornwallis thus beautifully describes this virtue, by a lively emblem: "A plant of a particular preservation, set by nature, becomes after the tree of Justice in the soil of policy; the first regard gives it life; the last growth and flourish; self-love inviting him to love; reason making his love general." — From hence we may infer not only a moral excellency, but a native policy co-existent with this virtue, since the due administration of Justice is self-preservation from the penalty and danger incurred by injustice, or oppression. In every sphere of life, Justice shines with peculiar lustre; and the most exalted honours heaped on mortality, destitute of this social virtue, would be tarnished with reproaches and disgrace. Justice not only revenges, but rewards; not only condemns, but acquits; — therefore, although to a self-convicted aggressor it may appear
cloathed

cloathed with every form of terror, yet, to the injured supplicant it teems with mercy.—The sovereign who with Justice sways the regal sceptre,—the ruler, civil or judicial, who impartially adheres unto this virtue, are heaping blessings on their fellow mortals, and acquiring laurels of unequalled fame. Justice is a positive and consistent virtue, that will not countenance infringement, or pardon trespass; it is also independent, disinterested, and uncorrupted; for it will accept of no bribe, whereby fraud or oppression may prevail.

Thus in order to judge of the practical influence of this virtue in individuals, we must diligently observe the general tenor of their conduct in matters hereunto relating;—and if we find an entire consistency, there we may pronounce, that justice reigns;—for private interest and advantage will sometimes prompt to the observance of Justice, when no better motive urges. In virtues, as well as coins, there are counterfeits, and it is sometimes

sometimes with difficulty the deception can be discovered. Justice being founded on right, naturally supposes a covenant, or contract, held in estimation sacred, and which is secured by Justice. Hence we experience the great advantages resulting from wholesome laws and legal government; since, as Epicurus observes, “Those who consider the advantages of laws, observe them out of regard to utility, without the influence of fear; but the ignorant and inconsiderate people must be kept in by fear alone.” Fear, as a persuasive principle, compels many to the shrine of Justice, who otherwise would reign on the seat of oppression;—society being essentially concerned in *mutuo tutamine*, in its mutual safety, and man as a depraved creature, is ever subject to trespass on the limits of common honesty, without some proper restraint.

Justice has raised its standard, and appointed rewards and punishments;—merit is duly weighed in the balance of equity;

equity; and as it proves, it should receive. Justice then leaves no escape for vain pretenders, or dissembling hypocrites;—it requires perfect satisfaction, and perfect satisfaction *only* will effect the purpose. Justice has but two alternatives, right, or wrong, by which it acquits or condemns; yet, notwithstanding the rigour of the law, it is not always the result of Justice.—Justice as a moral virtue, includes in it prudence,—temperance,—and fortitude, and establishes a harmony among them; for to be just, a man should be possessed of each of those virtues.

Thus have I taken a review of Justice, morally considered, as a social and political virtue, calculated to promote mutual confidence and esteem; but how comparatively trivial is this to the astonishing display of Justice in the eternal Creator of all things; that revelation informs us of,—we are here lost in wonder and amazement, admiration and praise! Merit, the criterion of equity, must

must be pleaded for, or against an object;—and on this principle the Deistical world may see that religion and revelation are perfectly *rational*.

Reason tells every man he is naturally guilty; and where reason is most in exercise, merit ceases as a claim;—and Justice remains offended. This, revelation expressly declares, and the law of God confirms;—reason demands satisfaction, or the offended being would be unjust, which is horrid to suppose; hence mercy cannot be bestowed at the expence of Justice; since then, one attribute would be exalted to debase the other. Revelation, the summit of reason, shews how Justice is satisfied, and mercy granted, to the apostate race of Adam;—finite knowledge here proves itself defective;—human reason betrays its comparative ignorance, and revelation triumphs over both. Justice is exalted, while mercy confers, where human merit must naturally and universally have destroyed.—

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Thus

Thus Justice, as a social virtue, merits our regard; but infinite Justice claims our highest praise and admiration. Let power,—riches,—honour,—boast their mutual charms; yet Justice shines with undiminished splendor.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XII.

O N

M E R C Y.



O N
M E R C Y.
E S S A Y XII.

"Tu nihil admittes in te formidine Pænæ.

"Hæc fatis est orare Jovem, qui donat et au fert;

"Det vitam, det opes."

HORACE.

"Omniaprius experiri verbis, quam armis, sapientem

"Decet."

TERENCE.

WHEN Justice calls aloud for vengeance,—and misery alone impends, Mercy steps forth with all her fair attendants,—and mitigates the dread decree. When darkness and despair pervade the human frame, this friendly luminary dispels the gathering cloud, and the bright orb of pity shines through universal nature. The billows of accumulating woe,—the waves of briny grief, are appeased by the gentle hand of Mercy and compassion. Mercy, when exalted to the imperial throne, distri-

butes blessings in abundance ;—revives the drooping penitent, and comforts the mourning and afflicted. Vengeance arrayed in all its fiery armour, attended with a train of fettered woes, draws forth the vindictive sword, ready to obey the sovereign command ;—but Mercy entering on the wings of love, stays the hand, and frustrates the decree. Mercy is a term that pre-supposes an offence given, or a transgression committed, that in the eye of equity *merits* the severest punishment.

Hence it is, some consider this virtue as unjust, and in some senses it may appear so ;—but in order to set this in a clearer view, shall consider it under various significations. The great necessity of this virtue will appear, when we observe how few there are invested with power, that properly attend to it. In answer to this, it may be urged, that the law is the only proper rule whereby to regulate our actions ;—this I grant, in a political view ;—but in a moral sense,

sense, the assertion appears indefensible, as Terence observes: *Jus summum est malitia*; "The rigour of the law is injury, cruelty, or oppression," so that, in this sense, law is not always justice. Law constitutionally, may be just, where circumstantially, it is unjust. So Mercy may, in some cases, constitutionally be unjust,—when circumstantially it is the height of justice. — Another objection may be made. How can justice and Mercy unite, when the latter is a mitigation of the former? To this it may be replied, the law of equity may condemn, when the law of nature will acquit. — Another objection that may be made is, if Mercy is the law of nature, it becomes a claim;—to this I answer, but a claim in no other court than humanity; and the courts of judicature and humanity are sometimes at variance. Mercy, opposed to cruelty, is indisputably just;—since an act of cruelty cannot strictly be deemed an act of justice.

Oppression being the violator of justice, and a trespass on the rules of equity; and Mercy, as diametrically opposite thereto, is consequently intrinsically just. It is a pertinent remark of an ancient author, "He is the great man
" that masters his passion, where he is
" flung himself; and pardons when he
" might destroy." It is a proof of human depravity, that few of us can return good for evil, — and few but will resent an injury. Notwithstanding the boasted dignity of man, there is very little Mercy to be found among us; — hence it is there is such danger in the investiture of power, and the necessity of law. Revenge being too prevailing a spirit, prompts men to the execution of the most horrid purposes.

Mercy shines most conspicuously in exalted stations; as for instance, in kings and rulers. — Clemency is a characteristic essential to the well being of a monarch, both to secure unto him the
affection

affection of his people, and to gain even the esteem of his enemies. " Let the
" authority, in fine, be what it will, says
" Seneca, clemency becomes it, and the
" greater the power, the greater is the
" glory of it." " Augustus, says an an-
" cient author, was a gracious prince,
" when he had the power in his own
" hand ; but in the triumviracy he made
" use of his sword, and had his friends
" ready armed to set upon Anthony
" during that dispute."

Cruelty ever occasions hatred, and Mercy love ;—the former is diabolical,—the latter godlike. —By oppression neither the confidence or obedience of any is secured ;—by severity, fear only is produced. It is a false apprehension some entertain, that rigorous punishments ever deter from, and prevent the commission of offences ; for we generally find men are blindly led into the actual commission ; and therefore, when assured of their unalterable doom, it drives to desperation. Mercy, improperly

perly applied, may in some respects be an encouragement to vice;—but in the view of the more discerning part of mankind, it is an incentive to avoid giving offence. Mercy necessarily sets aside any claim of merit, since to receive what we deserve, is no mercy,—but the receiving of what we do *not* deserve, is properly Mercy. As an instance of the ill effects of severity in perverting the design of its being used, we find Caligula in five years condemned more people to the sack, than ever were before him; and there were fewer parricides before that law against them, than after. Seneca says, “there is a certain
“contumacy in the nature of man that
“makes him oppose difficulties. We
“are better to follow than to drive, as
“a generous horse drives best with an
“easy bit. People obey *willingly*, where
“they are commanded *kindly*.”

Compulsion seldom effects much,—
and the forced obedience that it gains,
is with a slavish fear. The same philosopher

losopher as before quoted says, " there
 " is no creature so hard to be pleased
 " with ill-usage, as man;—the reason is
 obvious, because man is a rational in-
 tellective being, possessed of natural in-
 clinations and desires. Mercy is in some
 respects distinguished from pity, —in-
 as-much as the former is immediately con-
 ferring a favour, the latter only men-
 tally sympathizing with the distressed
 object. In this virtue, there will evi-
 dently appear to be no infringement on
 justice, if we consider it as a favourable
 disposition of the mind, in the matter of
 inflicting punishment, or a moderation
 that remits somewhat of the penalty in-
 curred;—as pardon is the total remission
 of a deserved punishment,—so that, al-
 though equity condemns, it is vengeance
 only that executes, and Mercy appeases
 that boisterous foe. As Mercy appears
 so obscure in a private sphere, and so
 superlatively excellent in an exalted sta-
 tion,—so also the mere existence of this
 beatific privilege, in the course of civil
 or political procedure, would be limit-
 ing

ing it within a narrow compass;—let us then exalt our views unto sublimer objects, and contemplate the astonishing display of Mercy through universal nature.

To apply this virtue in its noblest sense, it must be considered as it really is, a divine attribute—one of the blessed perfections of the Deity. Language falls far short of expressing the unutterable,—inconceivable,—incomprehensible mysteries herein contained.—In order to discuss this subject with brevity, I proceed to observe three things, wherein the infinite Mercy of Jehovah is displayed;—as in nature,—providence,—and grace. Naturalists tell us an element is that of which things are first made, and into which they are at last resolved. With respect unto those two elements fire and water, we experience their usefulness in subjection, though we dread their prevailing effects; and these are called *common Mercies*: but yet without either of these we could not subsist. Air is com-
mon

mon unto all,—and yet how few consider it as a Mercy! Reason forbids us to be theoretically Atheists;—but yet how many practical Atheists there are! The beauteous canopy of heaven,—that glorious luminary the sun,—the vital air we breathe,—are mutually and respectively unmerited Mercies.

The changing seasons are a living transcript of unerring wisdom, that bend their gradual course in heavenly order;—the hoary winter spreading universal gloom, is blisfully succeeded by the smiling spring;—the brilliant summer satisfies expectant hope,—diffuses universal joy;—when nature, lavish of her bounties, reigns the ordered time,—declining autumn veils the shining orb, until a future day. Thus nature is exuberant with boundless Mercies to ungrateful man. The works of Providence manifestatively declare their heavenly author to be a God of infinite and eternal Mercy.—The food and raiment we enjoy,—the various deliverances and preservations

servations known and unknown to us, abundantly testify, that there is an overruling power in all things. So various are the vicissitudes in,—and so great is the uncertainty of life, that a man must be destitute of any knowledge of himself, not to own his entire dependence on the Providence and Mercy of God. But language would fail me to describe the superior and unparalleled degree of Mercy that God manifests in the salvation of sinners. Man destitute of any claim of merit, guilty in every act and instance,—condemned by the law of reason and revelation, as an offender against Omnipotence itself, is now proclaimed a subject of eternal Mercy. A superficial recital would swell innumerable volumes,—and eternity itself will be employed in declaring this act of boundless munificence.—When nature shall expire in chaos,—when time shall cease to be,—Mercy shall exist, immortal,—immutable,—eternal. 14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XIII.

O N

GRATITUDE.



O N

G R A T I T U D E.

E S S A Y X I I I .

“ Et pater Anchises passis de litore palmis

“ Numina magna vocat meritosque indicit Honores.”

VIRGIL.

BENEVOLENCE, as naturally excites our esteem, as interest governs the greatest part of mankind;—and a benefit conferred is regarded from political views, when no superior motive actuates. It has been observed, that in all ages of the world, interest governed mankind;—and the truth of this observation lamentably appears in the consideration of the vast numbers who have sacrificed reason — religion, and conscience, with every valuable blessing, to gain a supposed advantage. Benefits are as various in their intrinsic value,—as in their relative effects;—and some have the specious appearance of excelling
N others,

others, when in the issue they disappoint our expectations. Society originally was designed for universal benefit;—but that which appears an actual benefit, sometimes proves itself to be a virtual injury. Friendship, the seeming source of every communicative blessing, when united with the latent foe, proves ruinous and destructive.—We are too ready to judge of benefits from their appearance;—but the most likely method of obtaining a proper knowledge, is to judge of them by their effects, as a physician does of a disease. This argument is reciprocal, both as to the person who confers,—or receives the benefit; since the receiver judges the intention by the act,—and the giver hereby judges of the Gratitude of the recipient. Thus Gratitude necessarily supposes a benefit conferred, whereby a person is obliged;—so that it is produced by a cause, but has no prior active being, till the favour is bestowed. So inexpressibly comprehensive is this mental principle, that nature employs every rational faculty in subserviency to
its

its will; and it is so obvious, that where there is life or being, there is a place for it,—since we have nothing but what we receive, which consequently demands our Gratitude. If a person has a will or inclination to confer a benefit, and may not have it in his power to put his good design into execution;—yet there is reason for Gratitude. Thus as benefits consist often in the distant view, so Gratitude appears in the intention,—expression,—and acknowledgment. A man may be nevertheless grateful for a favour received, who has it not in his power to make any adequate return. Gratitude appears visibly in the receiving of a favour, by a real thankfulness for the same;—the memory is refreshed by this generous monitor, and oblivion banished from its presence.

This principle must be considered as strictly disinterested, and totally destitute of sordid views of gain,—as it is in itself generous and noble. Gratitude mentally considered, is a contemplative virtue

that pervades every secret recess of the mind ;—confirms the judgment,—biasses the will,—settles the affections,—and influences the conduct. The volitions are here drawn forth into exercise, ardently longing for the reins of power, — and every intellectual faculty is studiously concerned to requite the gracious benefactor. Gratitude takes its residence in the heart, and engages every passion of the human breast into its honourable service. It is indisputably a duty, — since the law of nature makes it so ; for to be ungrateful, is to be unnatural ;—and yet too little of its happy influence is found in the course of nature.—Man, though endued with every rational faculty, possessed of an immortal soul, must cast his eyes down to the brute creation, in search of Gratitude. This virtue is of so sublime a nature, that it cannot dwell in sordid contracted minds ; consequently being generous,—’twill with none but the generous dwell. Epicurus says, “ Gratitude is a virtue that nature highly recommends. But after all, no one
“ but

“ but the wise man can perform this
“ duty.”

As Gratitude consists more in the acknowledgment than in the requital of a benefit,—we should have just and proper ideas of the value and extent of the benefit conferred, in order to testify our sense of it; therefore the more enlarged the mind,—the more capacious the view of, and the greater the Gratitude for the benefit. Seneca says, “ He that preaches
“ Gratitude, pleads the cause both of
“ God and man; for without it, we can
“ neither be social nor religious.” Gratitude is a debt in nature, since when a benefit is conferred, it may be justly claimed;—and yet there is no law extant to punish disobedience hereunto, but the law of natural conscience;—and indeed what worse punishment need there be? There can be no affectation of Gratitude,—it must be natural and genuine; or otherwise, time will discover the imposture. When a favour is conferred,—Gratitude manifests an heart-

felt sense of the obligation; and so far from being unwilling to acknowledge it,—it rejoices at any and every opportunity of declaring the unspeakable benefit;—it is impossible for hypocrisy here to gain admittance, since it consists in action, as well as expression; and the future conduct of the person obliged, will testify its reality.

But while I am thus expatiating on this sublime and christian virtue,—must observe there is a *mistaken Gratitude*, falsely so called, which is the offspring both of pride and vanity, and which shews itself in many to the following effect;—they will not receive a favour, without having the means of a requital,—because they are unwilling to be indebted for it. This, says a certain philosopher, is a kind of fantastical ingratitude. Reputation is so little genuinely understood, that many imagine it to be at stake, if an obligation is conferred;—and modern polite friendship is to know only those by whom you can
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be no losers,—and modern Gratitude such, that you should accept of no favours, but where you can return them. As there is no law, so there is no custom or prescribed rule for Gratitude—but wherever a benefit is conferred, Gratitude may naturally be expected. It is the absurd apprehension of many, that a person can never be grateful, unless he returns a favour, but this supposition will appear highly irrational, when we consider the object on whom the benefit is conferred may be circumstantially incapable;—and yet the receiver's Gratitude be the same in will,—intention, and desire. For instance, the sovereign may confer a benefit on a subject, and the master on a servant,—when both may be utterly unable to make any adequate return. How does their Gratitude then appear? The one testifies it by loyalty and submission,—the other by diligence and integrity in the trust reposed. Supposing a person confers an extensive benefit on one who makes him but a small return,—are we therefore to question the

Gratitude of the latter? On the contrary, the requital, though small,—will testify the intent, — and the intent, if good,—may satisfy the demand. Thus, after various objections refuted, and inferences drawn, we may conclusively determine this principle to be a sense of an obligation conferred, that expresses itself in the will, intention, or action.

Having considered this virtue in its nature and tendencies, — evidences and effects, — I shall proceed to enquire, where there is most cause for Gratitude? Where we are most obliged, and from whence we least deserve it? — To relatives,—friends,—and acquaintances, Gratitude is often due; to our king and country; — to the wholesome laws and government that afford liberty and protection; but above all to our Almighty benefactor, who continues us in existence, supports and preserves us; — that eternal friend, whom we hourly offend, is loading us with benefits, and crowning us with mercies; — all nature
unto

unto him owes its being; — his providence appears in every human blessing; and yet our ingratitude is displayed in every instance.

Man, who is an atom in the eye of Omnipotence itself, whose frail tabernacle craves hourly support from heaven, — whose being depends on the sovereign pleasure of Almighty goodness, — dares to imagine himself independent of his maker. Atheism in practice, and ingratitude in heart, are the base requitals of exuberant bounty. Where then is the claim of human dignity? Can any one contemplatively view the firmament of heaven, and every glorious work of creation, without allowing sufficient cause for the sublimest Gratitude?

But exclusive of every natural mercy, let us take a retrospective view of man, naturally degenerate, — apostate, — vile, — convicted on the evidence of truth, condemned by the decree of reason: — But, astonishing the thought! Mercy reigns propitious,

propitious, though merit would destroy. —Reason, the impartial judge of moral action, in terms that language cannot utter, extols the infinite beneficence of unerring goodness. — Let Gratitude then warble all the notes of praise,—and tune the lyre of love and admiration. While benevolence adorns the generous mind, or bounty still appears ;—let Gratitude her tribute pay, of truth,—integrity,—and love.

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ESSAY

ESSAY XIV.

O N

INGRATITUDE,



ON
INGRATITUDE.
ESSAY XIV.

" Know, nature's children all divide her care ;
" The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.
" While man exclaims, " See all things for my use !"
" See man for mine ! " replies a pamper'd goose ?"
" And just as short of reason he must fall,
" Who thinks all made for one, not one for all."

POPE.

HUMAN dignity,—moral suasion,—
and rational internal legislation,
were the doctrines maintained by the
heathens that related to Ethics, or moral
philosophy. — But we might naturally
imagine, from the general tenor of the
writings of Plato, — Aristotle, Epicurus,
—and others, that they had either wil-
fully, or ignorantly omitted mentioning,
the prevailing vices of mankind. Thus
of all the complicated crimes of depraved
nature, none is more diabolical, or de-
rogatory of the boasted claim of dig-
nity,

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nity, than the crime of Ingratitude;—since the rational faculties as a guide, should lead us to abhor the vice,—and those intellectual powers as derived,—demand our sublimest adoration of the great author and giver of them.

Ingratitude unveils its hideous mien in various dissembled forms,—and shoots its poisoned arrows with infernal venom.—It is generally produced by avarice,—pride, or self-conceit. A benefit conferred on the sordid miser, is ungratefully disregarded, any farther than it suits his own convenience. Pride restrains the haughty from acknowledging the benefit;—and conceit prevents the vain from owning the obligation, lest it should lessen their supposed consequence. Ingratitude necessarily includes in it a benefit received, which is neither actually or intentionally requited;—and it has appeared so variously abhorrent as to return evil for good.—Universal nature uniting in one common hatred of so malign a principle, has provided no law
against

against it but what originates with motives of humanity and compassion. Society itself we might reasonably suppose would take up arms of opposition against so baneful an adversary, — one so highly destructive of every common tie in nature, — and the destroyer of the general peace. Ingratitude is peculiarly dangerous in its nature, — since the discovery of it can only be made when a benefit is conferred, or somewhat may be reasonably expected. For instance — the generous and sincere man reposes the greatest confidence in one, whom he imagines altogether deserving of it; — in consequence hereof, he heaps numberless benefits on him, — but in a short time an opportunity presents itself, and this hidden viper betrays his confidence, and seeks the ruin of his friend. This vice is closely connected with hypocrisy; — for few men when *receiving* a favour, will seem otherwise than *externally* thankful; — but their future Ingratitude plainly manifests their insincerity. A man who abuses a confidence reposed in him, is
equally

equally ungrateful as one who has received an immediate obligation;—and he who studies not the interest of his friend, comes under the same deserved censure. Interest is of a magnetic quality, that draws to one point;—and in most of our undertakings is principally considered. Much of the crime of Ingratitude springs from a selfish principle urging men to act no otherwise than as it suits their own advantage,—without the least regard to the welfare of others.—This heinous effusion of a corrupt mind, is like the snake we read of, perishing through cold and hunger, that was carefully fed and nourished by a compassionate husbandman,—which when restored to its former strength, killed the infant of its kind benefactor. This fable may be applied in a moral sense to the present purpose, denoting Ingratitude to be a base and detestable principle, which, when it has gained its end, would even destroy its friend or deliverer. What a striking instance of its malevolent effects does history furnish us with, concerning

cerning Brutus, who murdered Cæsar, in the Roman senate? And how unnaturally cruel and ungrateful was the conduct of Nero to his mother!

These circumstances, evince the depravity of the heart of man.—Sir Thomas Pope Blount says, “Men generally look more after the dowry, than the beauty of truth,—its correspondency to their interests,—than its evidence to their understandings.” Hence we see the view of private emolument moves to the basest acts.—Envy, a diabolic principle, is another cause of Ingratitude, and prompts to the injury and distress of those, from whom we receive innumerable benefits.—Ingratitude, in general terms, is unthankfulness, or non-requital. When considered under complex ideas, it may be thus specified by modes, substances, and relations. The modes imply, a contingency or connection of benefits, establishing a purpose.—The substances represent distinct particular things,—as intrinsic, or comparative

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tive value. The relations, a number of concurrent circumstances, constituting the thing itself.—Says Seneca, “ Ingratitude is so dangerous to itself, and so detestable to other people, that nature one would think had sufficiently provided against it, without any need of any other law, for every ungrateful man is his own enemy.” Hence we see it is not only punishable by the law of man, but by the law of God and nature; though when we speak of nature, it includes the divine being as its supreme and only author, the eternal Creator of all things, both visible and invisible.

Ingratitude is an ingrafted evil that takes deep root in the heart,—and cannot easily be eradicated.—It diffuses its poisonous effects through the whole human frame,—and contaminates the whole natural system. It is a mental principle that dwells in the secret recesses of the mind,—and makes its appearance only, when a benefit is conferred. This suggestion

gestion appears evident, from the sentiment the philosophers entertained concerning it,—“a man’s own enemy”—consequently the seed of his nature—“as condemned by the law of nature”—consequently existing in nature,—which serves to prove the irrational and contradictory assertions of the Deists, who cavil with divine revelation, as manifestative of our native pollution,—which they seek ardently, by reason, to conceal. Ingratitude, as the basest of crimes, on the candid confession of a heathen philosopher, exists in nature. As unthankfulness to a benefactor, it is the general and universal crime of mankind, with regard to God.—Where is the reasonable being but must own himself unthankful and ungrateful, in innumerable instances,—for the unspeakable benefits he derives from his Almighty benefactor?

Will any rational man declare he has done his utmost, in a moral sense, to requite eternal munificence?—Can any one seriously avow, that he has fulfilled the

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natural claims of heaven to the utmost of his power? Impossible! On the contrary, — revelation declares, “All men have sinned,” and therefore all men have been ungrateful. — Reason teaches us to judge of true dignity by its effects; — and therefore it determinatively, — positively, — and conclusively, — forbids us to declare man dignified with any thing but mercy; — and that bright orb of ethereal refulgent joy rationally condemns us, as guilty of Ingratitude. Had the philosophers ever taken a general and impartial review of mankind, — they must have pronounced them vile, instead of honourable; — and the very argument they adopt to prove their fallacious system, destroys their purpose, and refutes their proposition. — The Deist, who reasons only on philosophical principles, argues thus; — man, invested with a faculty of reason and discernment, must be inherently noble. But how came he by this? It was created of God, consequently no merit of his own. But to what use does man apply this reason?

Does

ON INGRATITUDE. 205

Does he apply it to the honour of his Maker?

On the contrary, it is employed in the gratifications of self,—and for selfish ends!—Reason then cries aloud, ungrateful man! and revelation as impregnable against every assault of Deism, or infidelity,—is corroborated by facts,—and crowned by reason.—Ingratitude is more conspicuously flagrant where the greatest benefits are conferred, and where there is least desert of them. We have another proof of its prevalency in a quotation of Plutarch's, who says, “ Well “ therefore might the comedian be admired, who said, “ For reward only, “ man loves man.” Revelation informs us, that “ By the mercies of God we “ should present our bodies a living sacrifice, &c.” or in other words testify our gratitude; and to prove the sacred writings entirely consistent with *reason*, it is required “ as your *reasonable service*.” — How erroneous and absurd then are the conceptions which Deists

entertain of the sacred volumes of inspiration,—as being contrary to the dictates of reason! whereas they are in every respect the summit and perfection of it.

Ingratitude is as vile and detestable, as gratitude is generous and noble ;—and we can best judge of the abhorrent vileness of the one,—by considering the superlative excellencies of the other. The ingenious LOCKE says, “ All our knowledge consists in the view the mind has “ of its own ideas ;” which evidently denotes Ingratitude to be a base principle of the mind, that operates in the actions,—defiles the understanding,—contaminates the senses,—and enfeebles the will ;—it convulses every nerve of conscience,—and distorts the whole countenance of truth.—In short, its evil tendencies are so great, that it subverts every good design,—and replaces them with those only, that are evil. While gratitude claims our reverence and esteem,—Ingratitude deserves our hatred,—and abhorrence.¹⁴ NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XV.

ON

SINCERITY.



ON
SINCERITY.

ESSAY XV.

“ So drives self-love, thro’ just and thro’ unjust,
“ To one man’s pow’r, ambition, lucre, lust :
“ The same self-love, in all becomes the cause
“ Of what restrains him, government and laws.”

POPE.

PERHAPS there is no source whence greater evils have arisen, than from the unfathomable and impervious depths of a studied duplicity. Were purity of manners the universal characteristic of man,—there would be no occasion to assume what was evidently natural,—or to exhibit the copy while possessed of the original. — But contrasted circumstances present themselves, — and we too frequently affect, what experience teaches we are destitute of.—Seeing that it is the ideas others form of us, and not those which we have of ourselves, that must constitute

constitute our future reputation, — consign us to the abodes of ignominy, — or elevate us to the sublimer regions of applause, — our earliest ambition is to impress the observant world with sentiments favourable to our most sanguine wishes. Hence many assimilate apparently where they are really dissimilar, — and conform to things which they are naturally averse to. — In order to secure esteem and credit, — to counteract suspicion and incredulity, — we find many will appeal to conscience, where they rarely listen to its admonitions, — and claim integrity of heart, who themselves are intire strangers to it. It is nothing unusual for the vicious to invoke the excellency of virtues in support of their own conduct, — and to plead a good intention for the most nefarious procedure. But however dissimulation may be authorized by fashion, we shall ever find that “honesty is the best policy.”

Society, the fortress of human felicity, when defended by truth and honour

hour, — shall remain impregnable. — Power, the exalted throne of monarchial bliss, — and favour, the concomitant of senatorial wisdom, — accompanied by Sincerity, reigns gloriously triumphant. — Could we obtain the aid of every admired charm, — or appropriate the character of every beatific virtue, — invoke the powers of intellective reason, — or sing angelic strains, — yet destitute of Sincerity, all would prove frivolous and vain. — As there is a necessity for precept in most things, and for example in all, — so likewise there is an indispensable and absolute necessity for Sincerity in every human pursuit. — As the mariner cannot reach his desired haven without a propitious gale, — so fallacy must in the issue cause a total shipwreck of peace and a good conscience. Sincerity is a principle of the mind or disposition, that opposes falsehood, — hypocrisy — or deceit, and is entirely consistent with every profession, — declaration or promise; in all respects disinterested and true, — influencing the conduct to uniformity, — perseverance —

severance—and faithfulness; originating from a firm persuasion of its rectitude, and producing constancy and zeal,—it becomes immutable,—unalterable,—and invulnerable. Notwithstanding the peculiar excellency of this virtue, it has numerous enemies to engage with,—and various obstacles to surmount,—many difficulties to encounter,—and powerful adversaries to contend with. Some of these I shall mention in the sequel.—This source of benevolence is so independent in its nature,—and resolute in its practice, that all the united powers of eloquence or reason cannot alter its design. This virtue, intrinsically considered, is innocent.—Sufficient reason this, why so little of its effects are seen in depraved nature.

Sincerity takes its residence in the heart, the will, and affections,—its more immediate influence is discovered in the passions,—and the permanency of its nature is evidenced by the conduct. In a few words, Sincerity is the summit of
social

social happiness,—the perfection of love and friendship,—approved by heaven, and admired by men. Previous to a more minute discussion, it may be necessary to enquire whether it is founded on opinion, or knowledge. I am inclined to think it originates more from the former, than the latter; since ignorance and Sincerity often unite, when deceit and knowledge are mutually connected. There is no necessity for learning to render a man sincere, since natural and acquired parts greatly facilitate deception. We rarely hear of many being deluded by the illiterate and unlearned, in speculative or more interesting points.

Hence it appears, Sincerity is founded more on opinion, than knowledge;—but where both unite, for there is no general rule without an exception, the effects may eventually be propitious.—Were it immediately founded on knowledge, how could any be sincere in pursuing an error? Or again, how could those be sincere

cere who had never sought information? And yet we see prejudice, and superstition, have wrought these effects in many. The Pagan,—the Turk, or the Jew,—may be *more* sincere in their delusion,—than some *nominal* Christians are in what is true. So that error and Sincerity often co-operate,—and thus produce what is really mistaken zeal,—or zeal without knowledge.—Sincerity banishes all duplicity,—and its conduct is conformable to its profession. It pursues one single plan,—admitting of no possible deviation, and totally extirpates all wavering, or inconstancy of mind. It is allied to truth in the aim, though it may be connected with error in the end;—for as it is a disposition of the mind influencing the practice, it is immediately founded on truth in the view and opinion. Nothing can appear more derogatory of philosophic knowledge, or that which relates to Ethics, than their omission of this capital virtue in their moral precepts. So unboundedly excellent is this generous virtue, that it is the
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the origin of all others, and none can exist without it.

Destitute of Sincerity, all pretensions to virtue are hypocritical and vain. Destitute of Sincerity, every plausible profession will be stripped of its ostensible excellence, and exposed in its real garb. Were it the necessary evidence of every moral excellency, or every good profession,—and could we know the hearts of others, many who are now shining in a varnished outside show, would appear deformed and despicable. It is not subject in itself to change, but the mind of man is so mutable, that but little of this virtue is to be met with. It is a living,—active principle,—that co-operates with its virtuous concomitant, and by its existence do men persevere in well-doing. Sincerity is approved of God,—though virtually despised by men;—nor will our profession of,—denomination in,—or knowledge of religion, avail any thing without it. Did religion consist in a bare assent to a set of propositions like
theoretic

theoretic philosophy, it might be dispensed with;—but this is not the case. Religion takes its residence in the heart, subdues the evil inclinations,—biasses the will,—and effects a total change of mind and disposition;—but this renovation is supernatural. Sincerity then necessarily takes place, for it is vain to think of deceiving an omniscient being. Our external professions of religion, destitute of this principle, would heighten our condemnation. Love, the most generous passion of the human breast, without this, is despicable and vile.

Here gallantry and intrigue prevail, wounding with their dove-like weapons—admiring when they but despise; but where Sincerity has gained the mental shore,—this fervent passion glows with unabating zeal,—triumphs in the midst of woe;—feeds upon the plain of hope,—and exults in extasy and joy. Friendship the banner of every social comfort,—the glory of the wise and virtuous,—without this barrier against deceit,
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it would become the residence of woe,—the throne of discord and contention. — But blessed with this benign attendant felicity would crown our hopes,—and happiness conclude our days. In short, no virtue can exist where it is wanting; either contemplatively; — socially, — or actively. — Deceit is only a bad copy of a good original, that seeks to pass for the latter,—though discernibly the former. — On this account we may observe, Sincerity will prove itself in the issue to be most for our real interest. “ No “ protection, says Epicurus, is so secure as that of friendship; ” — and nothing more dangerous to trust to, where Sincerity is wanting. All the philosophic virtues without its genial influence, would be annihilated and vain. Fortitude, the embattled hero of the heathen sages; was stripped of all its boasted valour on the dissolution of two philosophers, for want of this principle. They had imbibed a notion of it in theory, but had not so *sincerely* received it into their judgment, as to evidence it

by their practice. Sincerity, be it observed, carries its proof along with it;—whereas deceit absents itself, when proof is required. Bishop Wilkins, in his excellent treatise on the principles and duties of natural religion, says, “Every man’s great end is happiness.” In *this* pursuit we may readily believe all men are *sincere*; the reason is obvious,—self-interest being a powerful motive. Notwithstanding the, intrinsic excellency of this virtue,—and the diabolic nature of fallacy or deceit,—yet it has two powerful enemies to contend with;—the one is the human heart,—the other the world. —From the nature of this virtue it may be objected, that as it takes its residence in the heart, how can that be an enemy to it? This suggestion is answered by revelation and reason, in a two-fold manner. —Revelation declares, “The heart of man to be deceitful above all things: &c.” consequently it naturally militates against this virtue. The natural tendency of the human mind is therein described as deceitful. How then can a
clean

clean thing come out of an unclean? This is intended to shew that our mind deceives us in innumerable instances;—and if left to the dictates of our own corrupt nature, we should fall into destruction. These things the philosophers denied,—asserting that our rational faculties would guide us in the paths of virtue, and preserve us from error and deception. Reason confirms the truths of revelation, by proving deceit to be a principle almost universal,—and Sincerity a virtue almost banished. Experience must convince every attentive enquirer into his own natural disposition, that Sincerity claims too small a share.

The more we search into the depths of nature,—the more we shall find cause to suspect ourselves.—Plato, though a heathen philosopher, was yet so far sensible of the deceitfulness of human nature, that he once dismounted from his horse, lest the pride of the beast should affect him. Reason further conclusively

determines this point, by shewing, the greater part of the world are deceivers, —or deceived,—one of these alternatives. Whence then can this deceitfulness proceed? Reason naturally replies, from the human heart, as the cause,—and deceit the effect. Thus revelation and reason unitedly prove the mind a powerful enemy to Sincerity.

The world is the next dangerous adversary that this generous virtue has to encounter with. — By the world we understand the people of it, — the voluptuous, — the dissipated, — and the refined, — for the virtuous are not, strictly speaking, of the world. — This class is mostly governed by fashion; — and Sincerity is one of the most *unfashionable* virtues extant. It seldom makes its appearance at court, — and is but rarely found among the slaves of pageantry and pomp. It is in short, a clownish sort of a thing, that is contrary to true *politesse*, and the refined *graces*. For a man to be sincere and downright, would be accounted the
height

height of plebeianism and ignorance;— and if a person is determined to insinuate himself into the favour of others, he must totally reject this *old-fashioned* virtue, and adopt one more suitable to the times.

However this exception may be made, that Sincerity in the estimation of the sensible man, is valued as a rare and precious jewel. Adverse as the avenues of regal splendour frequently prove to the growth of *this* virtue, —yet duplicity is by no means confined to the abode of princes;—but exemplifies itself in almost every character among men. Hypocrisy is a necessary qualification in a man of the world, and frankness of disposition by such is politically held in contempt. Hence it is we have so much fraud and deception, and so little of mutual confidence. Life is a masquerade where various forms and characters are assumed,—each aims to copy nature well,—the better to deceive.—Thus the world is a powerful opponent of this christian

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virtue.

virtue. Sincerity, it is evident, is a relative virtue, annexed to a principle with which it exists,—and without which it cannot exist. This proposition already proved, should lead us to self-examination,—knowing there are none but pretend to some virtue or principle, and the necessary enquiry is, are we in *that respect* sincere? If not, we shall in the end, deceive ourselves more than we shall others. Let it be observed, that Sincerity is not a theoretic, or speculative, but a practical virtue. Hence we must diligently observe our conduct, to judge of the Sincerity of our intentions. Many talk loudly of their good resolutions,—their hopes of reformation—and the like; but unless Sincerity presides at the helm, they will steer wide of the desired haven. Charity,—benevolence,—and beneficence are in themselves excellent;—but without this principle, they will be lifeless and inactive. Finally, it is Sincerity that animates to action and perseverance in all things,—dispels every cloud,

cloud, and banishes every fear,—fills the will with fervency and affection, and raises expectant hope to the brightest elements of joy. In every principle or profession,—in every word and deed,—in every act and undertaking,—Sincerity alone should reign.

14 NO 63

ESSAY XVI.

ON

FLATTERY.



ON
FLATTERY.

ESSAY XVI.

————— “Ob hoc nunc
“Laus illi debetur, et a me gratia major.
“Nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere.”

HORACE.

“Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit.”

TERENCE.

FLATTERY is a science in which most have made some proficiency;— and what many make use of, on particular occasions. Custom has furnished us with numberless precedents, — and this among the rest, that Flattery and gentility are as inseparably connected as government and law, — or any other indissoluble union. — Truth is so generally exploded, agreeable to the rules of refined knowledge, — that it became necessary to raise a standard, whither the sons of fashion might resort. — In consequence
of

of this modern edict, every tinsel'd beau becomes a careful student,—and in process of time, arrives to the degree of master of every polite art extant.—This science is as necessary an accomplishment in the circle of polite company, as any other common acquirement. Few like to be dealt plainly with,—and there is danger of offending the greater part in being honest and sincere. Such is the vanity of human nature, that most of us are apt to pay implicit credit to the fulsome poison of adulatory praise;—and so blinded are our depraved faculties, that few will look at the mirror of internal deformity,

Let every rational being take but an impartial view of the proneness of his will,—the bent of his inclination,—the sordidness of his views,—and the baseness of his desires;—and instead of considering himself a fit subject for praise, will say with Job, “Behold I am vile.”—But nature does not so instruct us;—its dictates are comparative goodness,—and superior merit.

merit.—Without further prelude, would briefly enquire, what Flattery properly is? Whatever specious pretences it may make to delicacy of sentiment,—or tenderness of feelings,—yet it is in fact, varnished lying, dissimulation, or falsehood. We cannot suppose a person flattered, where the thing praised is really deserving of it; but when and where there is no claim to merit. For many ages it has been a court fiend, and the merciless tyrant has been praised as well as the gracious monarch. Doubtless Nero, the bloody persecutor, had many of these court sycophants, who would extol his mercy, while they beheld his cruelty. Flattery is a most logical science,—replete with innumerable paradoxes; but differs from most others in never admitting demonstrations; for where no truth is, how can any thing be demonstrably proved? It is a dangerous snare, even to the wisest, but over ignorance and simplicity it soon prevails.—Flattery is a mysterious mode of elocution, that well managed, wears the appearance of plausibility;—

plausibility;—but if indifferently covered with verbal cloathing, the deception appears evident;—and the scheme is frustrated.

It is in fact a commodity that most deal in,—but some have a better manner of serving their customers than others. This polite science consists wholly in representing things better than they really are, and exceeding the truth by hyperbolical narrations.—So little regard to strict truth did many of the ancients pay,—that it was esteemed a necessary criterion of sublimity, to deal largely in hyperboles throughout the whole of their poetic writings. Thus Flattery is sublime falsehood, calculated to please the imagination,—to exalt our opinion of ourselves,—and to feed both our pride and vanity. But alas! there is no need of these friendly assistants, for we are all of us too ready to think ourselves something, when we are nothing. Sir William Cornwallis says, “I will speak of
“ Flattery as a thing that I have heard
“ spoken

“ spoken of, but was never acquainted
 “ with, the heart is the tongue’s master;
 “ in her travels she useth this instrument
 “ for interpreter; by the help of this she
 “ trafficks with the world, and travels
 “ through the sundry regions of dispo-
 “ sitions. All this time it is well; but
 “ now when the thoughts go east, and
 “ the tongue west, there is the disease.”—
 Plutarch says, “ the flattered have the
 “ disease of over-liking, or else they
 “ could never be surprized.” Flattery
 blinds the understanding,—and deceives
 the judgment, offers open violence to
 reason,—and derides while it seems to
 praise. Diogenes says, “ Of wild beasts,
 “ detractors, and of tame beasts, flat-
 “ terers, bite worst. Smooth language
 “ is a sugared halter. Flattery is like an
 “ empty tomb, on which friendship is
 “ inscribed.”

Thus it has ever been represented as
 an enemy to mankind, and what we
 cannot be too cautious of being ensnared
 by. Socrates compares “ Flattery to a
 “ painted

“ painted armour that is only for show;
“ and not for use; and affirmed those to
“ be the most faithful friends who re-
“ prove as well as praise.” From hence
it is evident in what general disesteem it
was held by the ancients, though I doubt
not it was practised among them as well
as the moderns. To a person aware of
the literal import and design of Flattery,
there is something peculiarly hateful; —
but what renders it so ensnaring, is the
want of this necessary apprehension. It
is as needful to be avoided, as an in-
fectious disease;—for the one infects the
body, but this, the mind. Vain glory
and conceit are epidemical distempers,
difficult to be removed, and leave be-
hind them fatal effects, tending to de-
ceive us in one of the most important
branches of knowledge,—the knowledge
of ourselves. Could we attain to greater
perfection in this useful science, — we
should be better able to defeat the ma-
lign purposes of Flattery, or deceit. But
the obstacle is in our own depraved na-
ture, that is, deaf like the adder, to the
voice

voice of the charmer,—charm he never so wisely. — Flattery, like the poisoned arrow, is directed at the imagination, which vain fancy readily embracing, is wounded in the views of bliss;—but it frequently meets with reproof, that exposes it in its native contempt.

When Pausanius, the king of Sparta, was frequently bragging of his performances, and bidding the lyric poet in raillery to give him some wise musty precept, he, knowing the vain glory of him that spoke, admonished him to remember, that he was a man.—Plutarch, in his laconic Apophthegms, recites the following of one that said, “ Sir, I always commend and speak in your behalf.” “ Well, said he in answer, I have two oxen in the field, and though neither says one word, I know very well which is the laborious, and which the lazy.” Charillus being asked why Lycurgus made so few laws? “ Because,” he replied, those whose words are few, “ need but few laws.” Diogenes, who,

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it is plain, was averſe to Flattery, ſeeing an unſkilful archer ſhooting, fat down by the mark, ſaying, “ That was the beſt “ way to avoid being hit.” The following verſes compoſed by Solon, a very ancient philoſopher, are applicable to the preſent purpoſe, and contain ſentiments rarely to be met with, from the heathen ſages :

“ Beware; for wicked man muſt ſtill be watch’d,
 “ Leſt ſecret miſchief in his heart be hatch’d,
 “ When ſmooth he ſpeaks, and with a ſmile as fair
 “ As new-born flow’rs, exhaling fragrant air :
 “ Man’s double tongue can flatter or can howl,
 “ When prompted by a black, corrupted ſoul.”

Neither eloquence or ſublimity, it is true, appear conſpicuous herein;—but it abounds with ſolid matter, and plain truth.—Here is no mention of the rectitude of human nature, but a clear diſplay of its native depravity and pollution. Flattery in doctrine, is a moſt dangerous enemy to mankind,—both deſuſory and vain. But yet moſt love to be flattered in this reſpect, and but few
 can

can bear to be reprov'd. If truth and reason theoretically preside, they will afford us this lesson,—that self-abasement is honourable, when self-praise is contemptible. Now in this view there are self-flatterers, as well as those that flatter others;—for every man that contends for the dignity of human nature, is sounding his own praise,—with a borrowed trumpet. — Flattery is in short, nothing more than oblique ridicule, or poison in a gilded pill;—for the flatterer must necessarily suppose the person flattered insensible of his real designs,—for no one would practise deception where he feared a discovery. This fashionable science, or modish vice, is a positive affront to the understanding, though a literal pretext of commendation. Flattery, scientifically considered, abounds with irony and contradiction, as extolling one for his, or her beauty, whom the mirror pronounces deformed;—and lavishing encomiums on the sagacity of one,—whom reason pronounces a fool. Were all the fine speeches, with which

the glittering courtier so much abounds, to be construed in their proper light, the persons so bespattered with approved falsehoods,—would consider them as accumulated insults.

Man boasts greatly of his reason, but here this noble faculty is wonderfully eclipsed;—and instead of shining in meridian day, there reigns an universal twilight.—Did men in general entertain a worse opinion of themselves,—Flattery would be less victorious; and the praises ascribed by others would, through self-diffidence, be deemed the effect of mere compliment and custom. From the necessary design of Flattery,—to deceive,—and its natural composition—falsehood,—we may justly pronounce it a vice rather to be avoided than attended to, and more proper to be exploded than adopted, or practised. But custom reasons quite otherwise,—and exhorts to the diligent pursuit of it, as a necessary and indispensable pre-requisite in our social connections. But on the contrary, Flattery

tery is destructive of real friendship,—since sincerity is a necessary evidence of it, and few however, can seriously vindicate this polite science on the principles of truth and integrity;—though most, regardless of either, periodically adopt the system.—Though the advantages of education—and the hackneyed repetitions of this dull unmeaning science, have in some degree defeated its progress, yet there is still sufficient reason for the wisest, to beware of what is so unquestionably calculated to please.

14 NO 63

ESSAY XVII.

O N

HUMILITY.



O N

HUMILITY.

ESSAY XVII.

“O Pater, anne aliquas ad Cælum hinc ire putandum est,

“Sublimes animas iterumque ad tarda reverti

“Corpora? Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido?”

VIRG. *Lib. vi.*

“Gloria quantalibet quid erit, si gloria tantum est?”

JUVEN. *Sat. vii.*

IMAGINATION veils our mental powers with the mantle of deceiving error;—finite reason compassed in its views, yields to the vain impostor;—but wisdom infinite, reveals the mystery,—and man is stripped of all his borrowed charms.—Nature is an extensive theme,—the garden of the universe,—its plants are various and grand;—but yet amidst its beauteous train, Humility cannot be found. Censure, the critic’s weapon, indiscriminately threatens all;—but yet
in

in blaming others, he exalts himself. Not so does Humility instruct us,—it begins with that, which most desire to leave,—namely, self-condemnation. Instead of being mounted on the stage of adulatory praise, or ranging on the mountains of vanity and conceit,—it dwells in the lowest valley of conceived notions. Humility is a grace that is supernatural, not to be acquired by knowledge, or attained by study.—Acquisitions in general, puff us up with pride, but this principle fills us with abasement. Philosophy ascribes the character of sages to its choicest sons, but Humility grants no other diploma than the simplest of the simple, and yet it is the perfection of wisdom. It is a grace that occasions us to entertain the meanest opinion of ourselves, and the strongest conceptions of our natural inability and weakness.

We are hereby taught to view ourselves in a proper light,—and to consider others in a more exalted view.—

Humility

Humility is a powerful adversary to that inbred principle called self, — that vain would be first in all, president and chief ; — but diffidence assigns it the meanest offices of life. Montaigne says, “ It is only Humility and submission that “ can make a complete good man.” Nothing less than a view of our native depravity, — and an experimental knowledge of our natural pollution and defilement, — a general perception of our moral impotency and weakness, — and a full display of our natural incapacity, either as to the power, or will to effect any thing that is really good, — can produce true, and genuine Humility. There are many vain pretenders to this christian virtue, — but the effects prove their pretensions false. Man is, in fact, a strange compound, — endued with the happy organs of sight, but yet mentally blind ; — possessed of the sense of hearing, but deaf to the voice of reason ; — every faculty is impaired, and he acts more by notion, than reality. Thus buoyed by the flattering dictates of credulous fancy, —

fancy, — he listens most to the empty reasonings of sense, — builds his confidence on the slender basis of received maxims, — and regulates his conduct by the bare opinion of others. Felicity is promised by a due observance of duties, — and contentment offered through the medium of triumphing reason, that nature places at the helm to keep the passions in due subordination. The purpose completely answered imaginarily, for *really* it is impossible, this rational self-governor pronounces humanity a system of moral rectitude and purity. But in the mean while what effects are produced?

Is Humility the companion of every *ostensible* virtue? On the contrary, it is totally excluded. Pride is its foundation, — pride is its cause, — and pride is its effects. This virtue is not to be attained by the knowledge of either moral or natural philosophy, — for its principles are calculated rather to exalt than abase. Sir William Cornwallis says, “ Preserva-
“ tion

“ tion loseth no friend, and Humility is
“ the author ; for failing by this com-
“ pass, we know where-ever we are,
“ and what we are.”—As pride is the
effect of ignorance,—so Humility is the
effect of knowledge ;—and as the former
is altogether irrational,—the latter is the
perfection of reason. Nor is this virtue
merely the effect of knowledge, but of
experience also ; it is therefore right
reason, which is nothing more than ex-
perience and sedulous observation. —
Knowledge is that, on which the greater
part of mankind pride themselves more
or less ; but our conceptions are so nar-
row, and our ideas so low, that at best
they are compassed within the limit of
mere suggestion ;—this assertion will ap-
pear evident, when we consider the va-
rious enquiries made by the ancients
concerning the nature of the divine
being. With a view of displaying the
comparative ignorance of the wisest of
mankind, when compared to infinite
wisdom,—and the abundant cause that
this our native ignorance affords for the
deepest

deepest Humility, — shall recite several instances that are applicable to my present purpose.

Thales, who first enquired into this matter, believed God to be a spirit, that made all things of water. Anaximander, that the gods were always dying, and entering into life. Anaxamines, that the air was God; that he was procreate and immense, always moving. Alcmaeon ascribed divinity to the sun, moon, and stars, and to the soul. Pythagorus imagined God to be a spirit sprinkled over the nature of all things, from whence our souls are extracted. Democritus was one while of opinion, that the images and their circutions were gods; another, this nature that darts out those images, and then our science and intelligence. — Plato divides his belief into several opinions. Xenophon reports a like perplexity in Socrates's doctrine, sometimes that the sun is God, and the soul God. Aristotle one while says, it is the spirit, another,

another, the world. Hereclides Ponticus does nothing but float in his opinion, and finally deprives God of sense, and makes him shift from one form to another, and at last says, it is heaven and earth. Zeno says, it is the law of nature commanding good, and prohibiting evil. Diogenes Apollonates thinks it is age. Cleanthes one while supposes it to be reason, another, the world: And Theodorus flatly denies, that there were any gods at all.

How dark is the mere light of nature, and how irrational are its dictates! Humility may well draw a veil over our ignorance, and self-abasement crown our vain conceptions. These instances are irrefragable testimonies of the vanity of finite knowledge,—and evident proofs of the absolute and indispensable necessity of conscious dependence. Perfection virtually invalidates this christian virtue,—but imperfection has an immediate claim upon it ;—thus no perfection being under the sun, it is proper to imperfect creatures; by proper, I would signify a natural

tural propriety in the thing itself; — though not a natural virtue. Humility being preternatural, we must look for it from the divine giver of all spiritual gifts and graces, who implants it in the hearts of his people. God is the author, — prayer the means, — and revelation the guide. These positions already defended by reason, the Deist is accused of folly, in charging the sacred oracles of truth with being contrary to reason. Humility is a grace that revelation declares essential to the character of a Christian, and reason says the same; — how then shall the Deist presume to censure revelation on rational principles? Here is the wide difference between the teachings of philosophy, and those of revealed truths; that the former deceive us in feeding our pride, — whilst the latter with divine influence discover to us the real state of every man by nature. Whilst fallibility and mortality, — depravity and nature, are inseparably connected, — Humility will in every point of view be becoming. The more exalted the station, —
the

the more exalted the grace;—the more refined the object,—the more conspicuous the virtue. We ought cautiously to distinguish this real attendant on merit from melancholy and despair,—inasmuch as the latter may proceed from an evil,—but the former, only from a good principle.

It was the common boast of the heathen philosophers,—that by the efficacy of their several doctrines, they made human nature resemble the divine. As Humility and condescension appear gloriously excellent in the latter,—and this Christian grace being totally unnoticed by the former,—the assertion appears both fallacious and vain,—and the boasted similitude is derogatory to unerring wisdom, and infinite mercy and condescension. Is it not Humility in its fullest extent for the divine being to have respect unto his fallen creatures? Does it not exceed the powers of language to declare the unparalleled and infinite humiliation of God, in assuming human nature in all things, sin only excepted? Reason must yield the imperial

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chair

chair to revelation,—and truth must bend the knee of reverential awe ;—while time shall praise the majesty of heaven,—and infinite Humility be the theme of eternal ages.—As a Christian grace, it implies a Christian nature ;—not merely a Christian name. It was the original desire of man to be as God, knowing good and evil. This was the effect of pride. The dire contagion spreading itself throughout the whole fallen posterity, the same natural propensities remain ;—in consequence hereof, without a supernatural power to effect a total renovation of nature, Humility cannot exist. From hence it is properly called a grace, and though in one sense a virtue,—yet entirely a gift. Destitute of this, our knowledge will appear but ignorance,—our qualifications and attainments, but as foibles ;—our supposed merit will appear worthless,—and our conceived dignity be proved contemptible. — Though endued with every faculty of wisdom, or discernment,—though possessed of natural and acquired knowledge,—Humility will be justly esteemed an ornament,—and an honour.

ESSAY XVIII.

O N

P R I D E.



ON
P R I D E.

ESSAY XVIII.

“ Jejunus rarò stomachus vulgaria temnit,
“ Importunus amat laudari?”

HORACE,

“ Vincet amor patriæ, laudùmque immensa cupido.”

VIRGIL,

HONOUR in all its glittering forms,—
and fame pourtrayed in its reful-
gent splendour,—are sullied by the ra-
diant beams of vain, exulting Pride.—
Wisdom,—knowledge,—learning,—the
gifts of bounteous heaven,—the sublimest
ornaments of nature,—pay their respective
tribute to this infernal king,—and claim
his aid while they display their gifts.
Reason, the impartial monarch of the
soul, who owes his being to infinitude
itself,—vainly admits this hidden snare to
impede his gradual course;—stripped for
a time, by Pride, of all his native charms,

discernment is eclipsed, and ignorance prevails. Counselling by this evil fiend to vaunt of real merit, reason resumes its seat, declares there is none.—Confusion spreads an universal gloom,—and Pride and folly now go hand in hand. As no effects can be produced without a cause, so also, in order to the existence of any thing, there must be some origin, or beginning. Thus Pride is the effect of a conceived notion, either of merit,—dignity,—or some supposed excellency, adduced from an imagined worthiness, that constitutes an ideal superiority above others. Real merit is often much tainted with ostentation, and ignorance usually its attendant. Pride is a vice that prevails in greater or less degree among all ages,—ranks,—and classes of people,—and ever appears in some respect or other.

As this vice arises greatly from self-conceit, we shall ever find it most prevalent in those, who have the least knowledge of themselves. Ignorance is the
progenitor

progenitor of Pride, and superstition is the offspring of both; it deals in dialectic syllogisms,—concluding more from probability than truth;—so that it is in fact, a conjectural art, raising imagination, and gratifying vanity. What renders it of still more dangerous consequences is, that it is seated in the heart and mind, where the rational faculties are engaged; hence we find, it sometimes overpowers reason itself, and the very faculties that should preserve us from its baneful wiles, are made subservient to its designs. — Pride, as it ever uses haughty and imperious terms, so it constantly vaunts itself in the self-sufficient language of egotism. Fraught with vanity and conceit, self is prime agent in all. From,—to,—and in, self, center all its hopes. Pride is indeed a most ridiculous, absurd, and corrupt disposition, since it struts in the tattered garb of indigence,—as in the imperial vestments of royalty. — It is a most self-deceiving vice, since it exalts our opinion of ourselves, and lessens us in the opinion of others. Socrates “charg-

“ ed Pride with representing things in an
“ inverted posture, and said it rendered
“ the way of prosperity very slippery.”—
The dictates of unenlightened nature are
fallacious and vain, since they direct us
to some supposed excellency in ourselves,
and consequently pamper this inbred evil,
as we find exemplified in Dionysius ju-
nior, who said, “ he maintained many
“ sophisters, not that he admired them,
“ but that he might be admired for their
“ sake.” Cicero, the orator, had vanity
enough to say, when his name was ridi-
culed, and his friends advised him to
change it, that “ He would make the
“ name of Cicero more honourable than
“ the name of the Cato’s, the Catuli, or
“ the Scauri.” So great is the Pride of
the human heart, that most people think
themselves better than their neighbours,
and few indeed but esteem themselves as
good. It is the only thing by which
many people are distinguished;—but this
distinction serves only to render them
more contemptible. Pride is a vice of
the most malignant kind, it prompts to
revenge, —

revenge,—cruelty, and oppression ;—the prostituted term of honour serves often as its plea, and the boasted claim of rank and dignity, too frequently afford a sanction. Though it is but one thing in its nature — yet is greatly diversified in its effects ; — for some pride themselves on their renowned ancestors ; — others, in their great possessions ; — some, on their learning and knowledge ; and others, in their sense and understanding. It is often cloathed in the garb of humility, — and shines forth through the cloak of affected plainness and condescension. The faculty of reason was evidently designed as the mirror of humanity ; but Pride has so dreadfully defaced it, that we all behold ourselves in improper colours. — What entailed ruin, misery, and woe, on the fallen apostate angels, but Pride ? What occasioned our first parents to desire to be as God, knowing good and evil ? It was Pride. Thus from the earliest ages of time, Pride, like an overflowing stream, has deluged this earth, and poisoned its depraved inhabitants ; — it is this vice
that

that occasions the aboundings of error and falsehood. The Israelitish princes commanded their prophets to “Prophesy unto them smooth things;” and the philosophers fed their disciples with such nourishment, as was suited to the growth of vanity.

Pride, in a few words, is a composition of false apprehensions, that engender vain confidence,—promote our good opinion of self, and lessen our opinion of others;—tending to exalt us on the inaccessible rock of ostentation, till our loftiness renders us the mark of ridicule, and a theme for contempt and derision. It manifests itself in various ways, but always tends to one end, namely, the exaltation—and commendation of self; and it directs us to survey with an eye of candour that, in ourselves, which we should severely condemn in others; it is blind to all human failings, —and ever displays the fairest side. Its language is, “Mighty man, how wonderful are thy doings! Wisdom per-
“ vades

“ vades thy noble mind, and dignity
“ crowns thy native excellencies,” —to
this effect Pride ever reasons. —“ Self-
“ love and Pride, says an ingenious au-
“ thor, and various passions, throw an
“ everlasting disguise upon our own
“ temper and conduct. Pride is so ex-
“ tensive,—so universal a disease of man-
“ kind, that I know no part of the in-
“ fection which we derive from our first
“ father, that has so intimately mingled
“ itself with the whole mass of blood,
“ has so much corrupted our best powers,
“ and runs without exception, through
“ the whole race.” It is the peculiar
province of this vice to deceive, by puf-
fing up the vain imagination; hence it is
we generally find it most conspicuous in
those, who in the view of others, have
the least claim to it. Montaigne says,
“ It is Pride that diverts from the com-
“ mon path, and makes man embrace
“ novelties, and rather chuse to be head
“ of a troop, lost and wandering in the
“ path of error.” Natural genius and
ability are pleasing, but, alas! Pride
often

often taints these derived benefits,—and serves to render them odious instead of admirable.

Aristotle once addressed himself thus, to a self-conceited ignorant youth :
“ Young man, (said he) I wish I were
“ what you think yourself, and my enemies what you really are.” Pythagoras used to say, “ the first evil that
“ crept into a family was Pride, the
“ second reproach, and the third ruin.” Notwithstanding, its heinous and abominable nature must evidently appear to every considerate mind, yet we are naturally incapacitated, and unable of ourselves to root it out;—nothing short of supernatural power can effect so great an undertaking. Since this appears to be so universal an evil,—and so direfully predominant—we may reasonably enquire what it is that man has to be proud of? Reason, the immortal guide of nature, imaginarily affords sufficient plea. But how did we acquire this blessing? Not by any means of our own,—it is the gift
of

of him that said, "Let there be light, and it was light." It is the sovereign unmerited gift of Almighty Goodness, who bestows this faculty on his human creatures, to distinguish them from the brute creation. He dispenses these blessings with impartial wisdom;—to some he gives greater,—to others smaller degrees of reason. What then here have we to be proud of? As we only receive it at the hand of God, it is ever at his disposal to remove it when he pleases.

Man's vain boasting is but in borrowed feathers. We are but stewards,—and therefore must, when the master calls, deliver up an account of our stewardship. But let us further consider how this gift has been employed, and we shall find less cause for vanity. Experience declares it has been abused to the purpose of rebellion against its divine Giver. Far greater cause for humiliation and self-abasement, than for Pride, on the account of reason. Learning affords a
refuge

refuge to this evil miscreant, and adorns him with borrowed plumes; but as it is the effect of ignorance, it is a shame to this acquirement: But alas! learning will not make a man wise; for, though Athens gave him birth, or Greece, tuition,—yet, after all, he may be but a learned fool. It is the height of folly then for men to pride themselves on this, which at best, they get from others. Knowledge is another gilded bait which this pampered vice embraces as a specious pretext;—but if a man attains to the highest summit of speculative knowledge, and remains ignorant of himself, he knows, comparatively, nothing. Wisdom itself is derived from him who takes of the foolish things of this world, to confound the wise and learned. Some vainly pride themselves in their riches, without considering them as the root of all evil, and that which take to themselves wings, and fly away. Honour, the boast of men,—and power, the staff of pride, are both subject to Omnipotence, at whose supreme disposal

disposal they are, and who can continue, or deprive, as shall seem best to his unerring wisdom. Beauty, that admired charm, is alas! but fading. When dire disease with all its mournful train, invade the spotless mass, — nature unwillingly must yield, — and the gay plant will wither, — fade, — and die.

Yet, notwithstanding, this ridiculous intruder claims a place here likewise. Grandeur, with all its glittering train, — appeals to Pride in its behalf, — vainly exulting on the tower of fame, though threatening danger proves its honour false. Thus the whole rational creation irrationally glory in what is not their own; — strut in the gaudy plumes that bounteous heaven gives; — believe themselves immortal, in a transitory state. Man, that of all God's creatures, has the least cause for ostentation, naturally possesses most. — Consult the oracles of truth — appeal to impartial reason — consider well experience, — even reason in its brightest form, — and there the mystery appears,

appears, — and man is seen but as he is ; — depraved, instead of pure ; — vile, instead of honourable ; — mortal in every age and instance. — View, on the other hand, eternal wisdom clothed with power, — infinitude, — and might, eternal, — immortal, — immutable, — invincible, — omnipotent, — omniscient, — and omnipresent ; and yet, inconceivably absurd to think of ! Pride fills its deluded votaries with the vain idea of independency. Man, who is comparatively a reptile, in the view of eternal majesty, dares to offend his Maker both in thought and deed. — Pride, is not limited to a social sphere, but increases with its object, and therefore aggravates the sin. It is an humbling consideration, when we reflect on what helpless beings, when in infancy, we were ; and how the pride of man must be laid low in the dust ; — the haughtiest monarch will become the food of worms, — and he that once gloried in his power, — may be mingled with the meanest beggar.

But

But if we extend our thoughts still further, where will the Pride of man appear, when its deluded subjects stand before the once humbled, but then highly exalted judge of quick and dead? Reason and conscience will unitedly condemn,—and confusion must convict. Innocence, the hallowed vestment of divine perfection,—would scorn the spotted garb; — and man, with all the embroidery of Pride, would be polluted and depraved. It has ever been deemed a necessary means whereby to judge truth from error, that the ground and foundation of the thing asserted, be duly examined; and if that be found defective, the assertion is immediately deemed erroneous.

Having adopted this method in the present discussion of this ensnaring vice, have first defined the nature of the thing itself, and then entered into a particular enquiry of what probable and reasonable cause there is for its existence

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istence

isence in man, and have endeavoured to prove, both from reason and nature, that there is nothing in man which can furnish with proper cause for Pride, but rather for humility, self-abasement, and abhorrence. Revelation authorizes this assertion, and pronounces mankind "To be less than nothing, and altogether vanity;" and reason sufficiently confirms it.

Thus, the best practical inference we can draw from this position will be, that as Pride is so hateful in the sight both of God and man, we should learn to despise it in ourselves whenever we see it. It is not only an evil, but an affliction also,—for it prevents us often from submitting to those things which might conduce to our welfare in this life;—it destroys all social happiness,—and embitters every joy.

Pride is a contentious spirit, that cavils more for form than reality;—more for custom

custom than truth;—more for honour than merit;—more for praise than profit. There are three things, either of which every prudent man would do well to consider: What he has been. What he is. And what he may be.—As all these reflections are applicable to every man, so also one of them might afford matter of humility and self-abasement. A man that prides himself in derived blessings, as if they were inherent,—is like a person borrowing money from another, to make a show and parade with;—when at the same time, he is indebted to another for it. If we can suppose one thing as much more absurd than another, as the comparative distance of the North Pole from the South, Pride must indisputably claim the title. Wisdom forbids the haughty man a place in all its courts;—Modesty conceals her known defects;—but Pride, with vehemence surpassing thought, exalts itself above the rest. As affectation universally incurs the censure of the discerning world,—so

ostentation merits likewise the severest reprehensions. The former is justly ridiculed for its *pretensions*, the latter, for its *ideal* importance. The inflated sons of arrogance, who pamper Pride by indulgence, are forgetful, in the hour of their imaginary greatness, that mortals are but mortals still,—that self-abasement is honourable,—and that their proper dignity consists in being humble.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XIX.

O . N

AMBITION.



ON
AMBITION.

ESSAY XIX.

————— Animum rege —————

HORACE.

DESIRE and fear are often like the troubled ocean, or the watery bubble, that rages for a moment,—but ends in nothing. Moved by these mutual principles of discontent, our lives are one continued scene of war,—and commotions fill the narrow space of time. Our present enjoyments are embittered by the view of others ;—and our future comforts, when obtained, are lessened by our self-deceiving promises. Felicity is the end that all have in view,—but to this hidden prize so many roads are made,

that the way is difficult to be found. The poor man vainly fancies riches can afford this blessing;—the rich man seeks it in the paths of honour;—the learned fall prostrate at the feet of knowledge;—the hero builds his hope upon that tottering fabric fame;—and the voluptuous dive in pursuit of it, into the depths of luxury and dissipation.—But alas! the end is not obtained, desire still cries for more, and fear is dreading the effects. Of these two principles Ambition generally consists, which renders it insatiable, never completely happy, and ever seeking an addition to its enjoyments. Ambition, with its mighty arm, would willingly grasp the universe;—but Heaven, wiser in its decrees, has limited the possession within proper bounds.

Mankind, instead of studying mutual good, are craving the pre-eminence;—instead of promoting the welfare of others, are striving for the diadem themselves, without considering the pearls of
virtue,

virtue,—benevolence,—and charity, will be wanting. Could we be raised above this lower earth, and view the world like the rapid current running its wonted course, reason would teach us to imagine that all would issue in the river of continuing joy. But alas! the briny sea of grief, disappointment, and affliction, unite with the liquid stream, and taint the pure element with adversity and woe.

Ambition implies fervency of desire,—zeal and ardour in the pursuit,—a general dissatisfaction of the present,—and aspiring views in future. All men are fond of being distinguished, and few like to remain unnoticed: hence it is, that this principle, in some degree, pervades the whole human species, and is not confined to any particular station.

Alexander, that mighty butcher of mankind, manifested his highest Ambition to be conquest; but when his end was once obtained, instead of yielding him

him the supposed comfort, it proved his misery, that he had no more worlds to conquer. Composure and tranquility of mind, are far more desirable than the noisome din of war,—or the mighty conflicts of mankind: but to this blissful friend, Ambition is a bitter foe. Peace, the sacred canopy of nature, is hurled from the verdured plain,—and anarchy returns to personate Ambition. According to the Stoics, “the first appetite of an animal is to preserve “itself;” but the first principle of Ambition is to excel. Ambition and envy are not widely apart, since we are apt to envy those, to whose supposed happiness we are ambitious of arriving. It is a passion, that may be applied either to good, or evil purposes; and though it exists in all, yet is different in its effects.

When exerted in a noble cause, it is consequently laudable,—and comes under the title of a proper spirit of emulation; but when excited merely by
views

views of gratifying our Pride and Vanity, and of exalting self; it is then highly deserving of censure and abhorrence.—There is sometimes as much of Ambition displayed in a ring of cudgellers, who are each earnestly contending for the glory due to his feats of cruelty and wantonness, as there have been in the schools of the ancients, who shall appear most distinguished for his learning and abilities. Let not any then suppose this principle consists merely in a desire for grandeur and dignity;—on the contrary, it is the highest Ambition that some have, who shall excel most in resembling the brute creation;—or in other words, in acts of revelling,—drunkenness,—and debauchery.

Ambition is that to our will, which the spur is to a horse;—it hastens us on either to good or evil. Seneca says, “Ambition puffs us up with vanity and
 “wind, and we are equally troubled,
 “either to see any-body before us, or
 “no-body behind us.” So that it includes

cludes a desire of being admired, as well as attaining the end. People in general consider too little this reasonable truth; in proportion to the requirement, so is the gift: now as all our powers, whether mental or corporal, are derived, we should consider that he who gave us those, also assign'd us our sphere in life; consequently he knows our ability, and therefore places us accordingly. Had he thought us endued with senatorial wisdom, senators we might have been; had he thought us suitable for the lowest sphere, that would have been our lot: so that to be ambitious of those things above our reach, is repining at the dispensation of Providence.

Honour, Profit, and Pleasure, says an ingenious author, are the world's Trinity:—to these most bend the knee of reverence, and drop the tender wish to obtain,—and to acquire each of them, most are ambitious.—Does your Ambition lead to the gilded streets of honours, dignities, and titles? Consider,
they

they are bounded at most by time, and that duration altogether uncertain. Mr. Addison observes, “ The death-bed
“ shews the emptiness of titles in a true
“ light; a poor dispirited sinner lies
“ trembling under the apprehensions of
“ the state he is entering on, and is
“ asked by a grave attendant, how his
“ holiness does? Titles, at such a time,
“ look rather like insults and mockery,
“ than respect.” Are you seeking profit? You will do well to remember, that profit and loss are nearly connected, and what you may imagine the former, may prove the latter. Are you ambitious of pleasure? Remember, pleasure and pain are not wide apart, and beware lest in seeking the former, you obtain only the latter. Fame is frequently the object of our Ambition, the summit of our desires: but nothing is more uncertain than popular applause; for though in one breath the world will applaud, in the next it will condemn. It is not fame that will satiate the cravings of our mental appetite, but the sense of having done well,

well,—and the testimony of a good conscience.—Is grandeur the object of our Ambition? What is all the pageantry and shew, that earthly honours can produce, when the person, thus attended, returns to his native earth? Can this procrastinate the humbling stroke, or once impede his final dissolution? Neither honour,—profit,—pleasure,—fame, or grandeur, can effect so great a work. Are riches the end of our Ambition? That glittering ore that richly arrays the monarch, that pampers imperial pride, that satiates the base desires of the voluptuary, brings misery with the possession of it. Is power the source of our Ambition? Of all the weapons which frail men possess, none are more dangerous than power; if wrongly handled, it will destroy not only others, but ourselves. There needs wisdom, discernment, prudence, and discretion, in the use of this weapon; and, except we are possessed of these, power will inevitably prove our ruin. Are learning and knowledge the object of our Ambition? When we
have

have attained to the sublimest degree in both, we know comparatively but little. This is a principle connected chiefly with pride, since to exceed others is, on the one part, the expectation; and to be admired and envied by all, is, on the other, the desire.

Were our Ambition thus gratified, what would be the result of it? We should imagine more highly of ourselves than we deserved,—and instead of attributing the merit where due, we should be only ascribing it to our supposed excellency. Were this greedy principle to be satisfied, we should have emperors of beggars, and kings of cobblers;—the world would be totally subverted, and the East would be drained of her riches to support this universal sovereignty. But happy is it for us, Ambition is suffered to reach no further than desire; and the more a man is perplexed with this companion, the greater stranger will he be to happiness.

Dr.

Dr. Turnbull, in his *Treatise on the Principles of Moral Philosophy*, observes,
 “ It is because the natural desire of
 “ power must be satisfied in some man-
 “ ner, that other power is sought; and
 “ it is because this true power is not
 “ earnestly contended for, that the mind,
 “ if it is not employed in the pursuit of
 “ some false species of power, preys
 “ upon itself, and becomes at last quite
 “ languid and insensible.”

Ambition is the source of various evils, considered merely as a thirst for power and dominion; since, in order to obtain that desired end, men have been led to the most hazardous enterprizes,—regardless of every tender admonition, or pathetic warning. Cicero mentions a book, written by a famous peripatetic philosopher, Dicæarchus, to shew “ that
 “ more mischiefs are brought upon
 “ mankind by the hands of men them-
 “ selves, than by the earthquakes, de-
 “ luges, or any other such causes.”
 Certain it is, that through inordinate
 desire

desire, and zeal without knowledge, united with the flaming torch of Ambition, men are hurried into acts of cruelty and wickedness to others, that prove in the end, instrumental to their own destruction.

We have hitherto considered Ambition as a vice, and connected with bad ends it is so; but when it is produced by a generous principle of doing good, and is zealous to promote the interest and welfare of mankind, then it is rather to be admired as a virtue. The reader will please to observe the distinction made in this respect, for that Ambition, which flows from a thirst for power, or any thing that centers in self, is a base, sordid principle; but that which arises solely from a desire of being useful to others, is properly commendable. "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord," says St. Paul. The most exalted object—the most sublime adoration! But notwithstanding most of us are so ambitious for time, yet how few of us are ambitious

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for

for eternity!—To glorify God here, and hereafter, is a consideration that dwells with too little weight on our minds, and is yet of the last importance. Should it not be our constant Ambition to praise and magnify that gracious Being, who is ever showering down his benefits upon us? most certainly it should.

If sublimity of thought, or refinement of conception, can be raised to a more than ordinary degree, it must be in the contemplation of such an object as is supremely exalted above others. So, likewise, if Ambition is extended to its furthest limit, and dignified with the most honourable pursuit, it must, according to the nature of things, be directed to a being of unparalleled excellency, and of divine perfection. Consonant herewith, Dr. Turnbull says,
 “ Man cannot open his eyes to consider
 “ the stupendous frame of nature, or
 “ contemplate his own make, without
 “ apprehending, or conceiving some
 “ mighty

“ mighty power that made, upholds,
“ and governs all.”

From hence we may reasonably conclude, that as man is but a sojourner on earth, he should consider the world as his inn,—nature as the road,—revelation as his map or guide,—and eternity his home.—Thus viewing every human comfort as uncertain,—and every sublunary joy as transitory,—our Ambition should be directed to those blessed regions, where sorrow never entereth;—and where are pleasures for evermore!

14 NO 63

ESSAY XX.

O N

A V A R I C E.



O N
A V A R I C E.

E S S A Y XX.

Semper Avarus eget.———

HORACE.

PROFUSION, lavish of its gifts,
invokes festivity and mirth;—frugality, wiser in itself, imparts a moderate share;—but pining Avarice, willing to engross the whole, is *really* possessed of neither. Though smiling plenty crown each revolving year,—or fair abundance prove the harvest of our hopes,—yet, in desiring *more*, we ever want; and as the poet beautifully expresses it,

“ Seek the cruel something unpossessed.”

While dissipation and extravagance are the prevailing principles of many, an earnest desire of accumulation, is alone predominant in others. To amass, is the delight of some ;—to disperse, the enjoyment of many. The world is a rich and extensive prospect, which being viewed in the glass of natural conception, is greatly magnified:—but when experience represents it more clearly to our view, the mountain descends into a mole-hill ; and what before appeared the perfection of happiness, is now considered as contemptible, and altogether unworthy the attention of one, formed for a world that is eternal !

There is in every man a natural propensity to regard only the present, and remain forgetful of futurity ; this proneness of the will works upon desire, and through the strength of imagination, and variety of suggestion, produces that legion of evils, comprized under the term——Avarice.

It

It has been remarked by an ingenious writer, “ that every animal, except
 “ man, keeps to one dish; but man falls
 “ upon every thing that comes in his
 “ way.” The regularity of the course of nature, and the infinite rectitude of the divine appointments, evidently prove the sovereignty of the Divine Being;—nor is there a more certain evidence of the irresistibility of Almighty Power, than the fervency of our desires, being universally subordinate. Though desire be ever so vehement, yet, as dependent creatures, we are enjoined submission; and however atheistical men may be, no effect can be produced without a cause, nor any desire satisfied without the permission of the Cause of Causes. Thus Avarice, literally considered, signifies inordinate,—fervent,—and insatiable desire. Notwithstanding the chimerical assertions of the Stoics, no man ever yet was free from the desire of something, which admits either pleasure or pain. “ Present and future good, says Zeno, “ give rise to pleasure and desire.” But
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in other passions of the mind there are degrees; consequently Avarice, as a distinct principle, may be deemed immoderate desire.

Aristotle says, “ the will is two-fold, “ one rational, the other sensual; and “ often times the sensual over rules the “ other, though superior to it in the “ order of nature.” The sensual principle appears to be desire,—a passion in itself naturally ignorant of what is best; being governed by sensual appetite, and consequently happily subordinate to the will of God, who knows what is best for us. Fain would depraved reason urge us to implore, that the reins of government might be in our possession;—but the Divine Being, who knows our ignorance in asking, forbids the constant gratification of our desires. Time and privileges are put into our hands, but vitiated desire knows not how to use them. From hence it appears, that Avarice,—covetousness,—or insatiable desire; prevails more or less in every man. It is
the

the notion of some, that this principle consists alone in possessing much, and desiring more. Certain it is that it includes this idea, but not to the exclusion of others, since Avarice displays itself, as well as pride and ambition, in various ways.

Socrates compared covetous persons to “fowls that choak themselves by
 “over-eating, and to the setting sun
 “that benefits no-body: Their wealth,
 “said he, is like the feasts made for the
 “dead, who have all, but enjoy nothing;
 “or like fig-trees growing on a precipice,
 “which do service to nothing but
 “kites and crows.” Antisthenes says,
 “a covetous man can neither be a good
 “man, nor a king, nor a freeman.”

Having hitherto solely considered the proper definition of Avarice, shall proceed further to enquire in what way it acts as a principle; which will enable us to determine more particularly on its nature. As a desire, it is applicable to something

something desired;—as a passion, to something loved and admired. The natural operations of Avarice generally are either to riches,—power,—fame,—grandeur,—learning,—knowledge,—or honour. To one of these it is generally directed; and to acquire either, most are covetous. An enquiry necessarily results, what is the end in view by obtaining these? That which mankind in general are eagerly in pursuit of—happiness; it is the supposition of benefit, or the view of aggrandizement, that prompts to the obtention of some hidden prize. Every faculty of the mind is impressed into the service of desire,—and every power of the soul is engaged in the common cause. Reclining thought exposed on the mighty ocean of embarrassment, casts in the anchor of hope,—till every boisterous wind shall cease;—the gale of promising expectancy obtained, we sail by the compass of desire; but wanting the skilful pilot of discretion, founder on the rock of vain imagination.

Goldsmith,

Goldsmith, in his essays, says, “ Misers
 “ are generally characterized as men
 “ without honour or humanity, who
 “ live only to accumulate; and to this
 “ passion sacrifice every other happi-
 “ ness.” It is the height of precipitancy
 in any, to brand those with the epithet
covetous, who, from principles of duty
 and domestic prudence, agreeable to the
 law of expediency, exercise frugality and
 moderation. This inordinate desire of
 acquiring, increases with our years; and
 the older people grow, the more co-
 vetous they are in general. Avarice is
 more eminently conspicuous in those,
 who in possessing abundance, are covet-
 ing more, and at the same time, un-
 willing that any should have a share in
 their supposed happiness.

It is the sordid desire of engrossing all,
 to the exclusion of others, that singu-
 larly distinguishes this disposition of
 mind. Prodigality is an extreme to be
 avoided, as well as Avarice; but while
 the former may injure many, the latter
 benefits

benefits none. Daily experience proves that neither riches,—power,—fame,—nor grandeur, can secure the invaluable and humanly unattainable privilege of felicity. The entire and sole acquisition of some temporal good, is the object held in view by Avarice; and hence it is that a chain of evils flow from this source and origin: some of these are injustice,—cruelty,—oppression,—falshood,—diffimulation,—and lying.

“ There is a particular fault, says an
 “ admired writer, which I have observed
 “ in most of the moralists in all ages,
 “ and that is, that they are always pro-
 “ fessing themselves, and teaching others
 “ to be happy. This state is not to be
 “ arrived at in this life, therefore I
 “ would recommend you to talk in an
 “ humbler strain.”

Avarice does not in any thing more generally distinguish itself than in the desire of happiness, or in other words, to attain that, in which it is supposed felicity

licity is included. Bion, the Cynic Philosopher, used to say, "a covetous man does not enjoy his money, but his money is master of him." Now, Avarice necessarily impedes enjoyment; since in desiring more, we cannot enjoy the present possession. It is increase and superabundance, or rather inexhaustible treasure, that Avarice seeks, not a bare sufficiency; hence it totally destroys contentment. It is the source of great enmity among men, for where this principle reigns, the success of one individual is the misery of another.

Seneca says, "What is the end of Avarice, when at best we are but stewards of what we falsely call our own?—This consideration should excite us to desire no more than is bounded by competency; since, as stewards, we must be accountable for the use or abuse of them. When we further consider that all that we temporally possess, we must be dispossessed of,—and all that we gain we must soon lose,—and all that
we

we desire, we may not obtain,—and if obtained, may not answer our expectation:—considering these things, annexed to the greatest uncertainty and precariousness of tenure, evidently and rationally prove the extreme folly of Avarice.

View the busy crouds of men hastening alternately to their end, but thoughtless of eternal gain, are avaricious of earthly profit. Each promises himself some secret joy; but, like the spider's web, it is built on the thread of life, which yields to the besom of devouring death. Fruition and obtention is the prospect;—attention, —intention, —retention, —and contention, are the different roads; some by assiduity seek, and never find;—others, while intending, are frustrated in the attempt;—some, in retaining hope to find increase;—others, in contending, wish to overcome: and thus inordinate desire is variously exemplified.—There is a solemn interrogative that infallibility itself makes use of, which gives a weighty turn
to

to this prevailing principle, “ What shall
 “ it profit a man, if he gain the whole
 “ world, and lose his own soul? Or
 “ what shall a man give in exchange for
 “ his soul?” There is a natural propen-
 sity in man, to desire to gain some-
 thing ; but the question is, what that de-
 sire reaches to?

To consider that as a virtue which is
 generally denominated a vice, may seem
 not only the perversion, but a most hete-
 rogeneous delineation of a principle uni-
 versally condemned, as baneful to so-
 ciety,—and the effusion of a sordid,
 contracted mind. But if extreme desire
 is the analysis,—the several component
 parts, when applied to what is amiable,
 as the inordinate desire of that, which
 shall tend to our own good, and the
 welfare of others ; under these circum-
 stances, even Avarice, as we have be-
 fore defined it, becomes a virtue,—and
 claims both our admiration and imita-
 tion.—It may probably be difficult to
 determine whether the inordinate desire

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of

of sublunary benefits is most ridiculous or criminal,—for it is evidently both.—That it renders men despicable even in possessing what generally procures esteem is unquestionably true,—and the fear of losing, almost annihilates the pleasure of obtaining.

Seeing the dissatisfactory nature of all earthly pursuits, as riches, honours, &c. if there is any thing worth exciting desire, it should be that which can satisfy it. Avarice is relatively insatiable, since it is generally employed on objects that cannot in themselves afford solid satisfaction. To be anxiously solicitous for things unattainable, is vain ;—but to desire such as are the free gift of sovereign mercy, is far more reasonable. Revelation abounds with invitations to such as hunger and thirst after righteousness, to come and buy, “ without money, and “ without price.” Now the temporal benefits we are avaricious of, are not to be had at so easy a rate. But we are told, “ Blessed are they that hunger and
“ thirst

“ thirst after righteousness, for they shall
 “ be filled.”——Avarice can never be
 filled with any earthly good. After we
 have obtained the whole scope of our
 desire as to this life, the immortal mind
 will still be craving. There is nothing
 short of that overflowing fountain of
 fullness, and those inexhaustible riches
 treasured up in Christ, that can afford
 permanent and solid satisfaction.

Some may be ready to object, that as
 Avarice in its nature is a vice, it ought
 not to be rendered a virtue. To this it
 may be answered, that as Avarice in-
 cludes inordinate, longing desire,—when
 fixed only on temporals, it is an evil,
 or a vice.—This is its natural ten-
 dency. But when by a supernatural
 power, those desires are changed from
 the love of vice, to the love of virtue,
 and from temporal views, to center only
 in spiritual; then an Avarice for hea-
 venly treasure is our highest privilege,
 not merit, and will issue in eternal hap-
 piness.—It is an old saying “ that
 U 2 “ good

“ good may be brought out of evil,” so this principle, which is usually directed either to riches, honour, &c. may thro’ divine renovation, be aspiring to that inheritance which is eternal in the heavens. Now, the difference of that Avarice which is sensual, and that which is spiritual, is seen by the effects; the former issues in cruelty, oppression, &c. the latter in charity and beneficence. To desire much and to obtain little is common, and as Avarice in natural things excites the hatred and enmity of our competitors, so our desires being frustrated, will expose us to the obloquy and reproach of many.—Since every gilded toy, a passing world can shew, will perish in the use; and every *seeming* good, serve only to increase our pain;—let Avarice aspire to those sublimer things, the end of which is——Peace.

14 NO 63

E S S A Y

ESSAY XXI.

ON

RICHES.

“ good may be brought out of evil,” so this principle, which is usually directed either to riches, honour, &c. may thro’ divine renovation, be aspiring to that inheritance which is eternal in the heavens. Now, the difference of that Avarice which is sensual, and that which is spiritual, is seen by the effects; the former issues in cruelty, oppression, &c. the latter in charity and beneficence. To desire much and to obtain little is common, and as Avarice in natural things excites the hatred and enmity of our competitors, so our desires being frustrated, will expose us to the obloquy and reproach of many.—Since every gilded toy, a passing world can shew, will perish in the use; and every *seeming* good, serve only to increase our pain;—let Avarice aspire to those sublimer things, the end of which is——Peace.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XXI.

ON

RICHES.

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ON
R I C H E S.

ESSAY XXI.

Opes irritamenta malorum.

VIRGIL.

Solum unum hoc vitium adferet senectus hominibus.

Attentiores sumus ad rem omnes, quam sat est.

TERENCE.

WERE we to judge of the goodness of a cause by the number of its adherents,—or acknowledge all things to be true that are strenuously defended,—or determine on the excellency of any thing from the variety of its admirers;—we must naturally suppose that in Riches every blessing is included. To this ensnaring idol many offer their daily oblations;—it is alone worshiped by some,—and the summit of desire to others.—In hopes of acquiring wealth, many will

sacrifice their peace, and prostitute their consciences,—vend their dearest privileges to obtain a trifle;—reign inestimable benefits to procure uncertain good. Extreme Riches, or extreme poverty, are evils greatly to be dreaded; for though the latter is inexpressibly afflictive,—yet the former is superlatively dangerous. Temporally they insure trouble in the management and tenure; and if we imagine we can thereby procure eternal happiness, our disappointment will be truly awful, for as an ingenious author once observed, “if heaven could be purchased with money, the rich would be the only purchasers.”——But, says our Lord, “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, one that trusts in his Riches, to enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Great possessions are too seldom considered as a gift, or as that which we receive at the hand of divine munificence; which is evidenced plainly in the uses to which they are generally applied. It is not so much

much Riches as the abuse of them that constitutes them evil. When united with charity and benevolence, they are a blessing to the possessor, and of service to others; but when annexed to avarice, they are of present benefit to none.—Estimation stamps a value on the thing esteemed; possession on the thing possessed. Now Riches are almost generally esteemed, but not so generally possessed; to form then any proper judgment of their intrinsic value, we must observe the conduct of the affluent. The idea of procuring something that wears the specious mask of pleasure, urges to covet the attainment; for were there not necessary effects resulting, none of us should value it as *ore* for its *simple* quality.

Socrates says, “ Riches are not to be
 “ managed without reason, no more
 “ than a horse without a bridle; and as
 “ wine is tainted by a vessel, so are these
 “ by the conduct of their owners.”—All
 men in a sense are traders, but though
 now

now possessing much, by one blast of adversity may be reduced to a very contrasted situation. By all men being traders we may observe, that talents, whether more or less, is their capital, and their use of them the merchandize: Some are employed so badly, that the trader becomes metaphorically a bankrupt; not satisfying the demands of his creditors, who are conscience, truth, integrity, &c.

Riches are to be considered as derived, not naturally inherent, though legally bequeathed; but the gift of that Divine Being, who giveth to some ten, to others an hundred fold. Thus viewed, we shall in these things acknowledge a providence; and as influenced by the reflection, shall use them to the glory of him who dealeth so bountifully with us. The reason why Riches are held forth as the root of all evil is, that the desire of them springs from an evil principle, and consequently, when obtained, the effects are evil. There cannot be a stronger
proof

proof of the false estimation of things, than in the general preferment of opulence in another, before merit.—If a man is rich he will be noticed by most,—if he is poor as much disregarded;—if in point of merit deserving esteem, the world rarely do more than pity, because it is obscured through poverty.—Riches are like the gawdy flower, that attracts the swarming bees, who, when they have extracted all that they can get, desert it as an useless thing: thus are rich men courted for their Riches; but if deprived of them, the sycophants no longer come. Seneca says, “ we are all turned
“ merchants, and look not into the qua-
“ lity of things, but into the price of
“ them; for reward we are pious, and
“ for reward again we are impious.”

The doctrine generally infused into our minds is gain, the object held in view by our relatives and friends is Riches: In order to obtain this mistaken good every means is sought after,—we are taught from our infancy to acknowledge

ledge its importance,—and maturity confirms us in the belief of it. Nor is this prevailing principle matter of surprize, when we consider that apparently our temporal interest depends, so that in some sense the motive is good,—though the object is not so. They are desired for ourselves and others, on various accounts; by many no doubt, in order to support the family dignity, or to retrieve its departing grandeur:—by others to afford assistance to necessitous expectants: but with few, alas! for the glory of God and the good of mankind. For as one once observed, “benevolence is the blossom, beneficence the fruit;” so that we may have the will, but without Riches to enjoy the power, we cannot effectuate the desired good. “Our parents, says Seneca, have trained us up into admiration of gold and silver: and the love of it is grown up with us to that degree, that when we should shew our gratitude to heaven, we make presents of these metals.”

The

The language of mankind in general, concerning Riches is, "it is the chief good, the completion of desire." But this, like all other sublunary pleasures, is deceitful, and at best but transitory. Diogenes says, "the love of money is the metropolis of all evils."

Sir William Cornwallis thus expresses himself respecting riches; "Alas! poor world, that lovest nothing but Riches, and yet servest thy starved affections, and wilt needs chuse to be the servant of this impotent vanity; from whom pull but the attire of opinion, and you have served nothing but the distemperature of imagination." Pythagoras, in his golden verses, says,

"But know that all must to the shades below,
"That Riches sometimes ebb, and sometimes flow."

When honestly obtained, prudently enjoyed, and liberally dispersed, they are supporters of the great fabric of society, and the liveliest image of humanity.

manity. Riches are the mark, industry the road, frugality the guard; and prudence the guide. Man is not born to live for himself; but is intended to answer a far nobler end. They are not actually at our own disposal, for though “the lot is cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”—As we cannot expect to attain the end without the use of means, some authors, knowing how popular a cause it is, have pointed out the road to this fascinating charm, in hopes, probably, to reform mankind with a view of pleasure. The first means towards affluence, say they, is thrift, which implies a due attention to great, and not forgetting trivial concerns as beneath our notice; since a number of seeming trifles constitute something really considerable.

Diligence, say they, is the second prerequisite, without which we cannot expect success to attend our undertakings, since neglect incurs the contrary. A third means, they infer, is method in business,

business, without which all things become soon in a state of anarchy and confusion; and a man is at a loss to know whether he is rich or poor, till perhaps fatally convinced of the latter.

A good capacity is not so immediately necessary to acquire Riches, for the refined sentiments of aspiring genius are a constant check to this accumulating art, which requires us to abandon the lofty fallies of imagination, when ambition would act the contrary.—The plodding man, whose very soul seems materially earth, is the most probable person to succeed in this respect;—and shall shine in the school of commerce, when the man of letters would appear a dunce. There was nothing perhaps, about which the philosophers differed more than in the determination of the ultimate end or happy life, unless in their opinion of the Divine Being, and so it may be truly said of men in our day; which leads me to consider the term Riches, in its sublimest and

and most exalted sense. The Riches of this world consist in possessing much of it,—the Riches of the next, of blessings in reversion, to be enjoyed, and that eternally. To the super-eminent and refined acquisitions of futurity,—to permanent possessions and infinitely increasing wealth, virtue unfolds a brilliant scene, where the sacred pages conduct us. Revelation is the only directory, but the Deist, who denies the truths of infallibility, must be convinced by reason only.

Reason ever contends for duration, and when supernaturally renovated, prefers eternal, before natural benefits. As then the Riches dug out of the earth, are for earthly purposes,—those that are for heavenly designs can alone be found in heaven. This is agreeable to reason. This acknowledged, we cannot ascend the celestial heights, where *true* Riches alone are found, unless the medium of obtaining it, is revealed; and that revelation

lation proved authentic by the satisfactory comforts derived from it. The end of sublunary good, is satisfying desire.—This no earthly gain ever yet could effect. Reason exhorts us to enquire further, and revelation shews where it is to be found. St. Paul says, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ.” In him is treasured up all wisdom and knowledge. Riches of a durable, satisfying kind center in him, that cannot be found elsewhere.

Herein is the rationalist self-confuted in viewing the uncertainty of earthly riches, and rationally compelled to acknowledge there are Riches in reversion for the appointed possessors, that they have an earnest of here below; which with departing life cannot be delusive. When the truly virtuous man resigns himself to the cold embraces of mortality,

W
tality,

talities,—it is not under the brutal idea of annihilation; but with the extasies of one who is about to take possession of an eternal inheritance. Appeal to common observation and resolve this query, Can, or would a man, knowingly, deceive others at a period when deception is useless? Reason denies the probability. In the prospect then of these durable Riches and Righteousness, men have cheerfully submitted to the common enemy of nature in the greatest triumph.

Now as to temporal acquisitions, we are in hourly danger of losing them, in daily jeopardy though possessing them; but those Riches which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, are in the prospect; and when once obtained, we shall never be deprived of them. Common life and common sense lead our depraved reason no higher than the present, and therefore for want of knowing, men dispute; and though ignorant, deny. Affluence in
the

the estimation of the world, is the criterion of felicity ;—in the view of moralists, the root of common evil ;—we see the general abuse of Riches ;—the dissatisfactory nature of them ;—the prostitution of privileges to secure them. They have been likewise deemed subservient to public utility, and a proper stimulative to industry and perseverance :—but after all, we may reasonably conclude,—that as earthly Riches are rather impending danger, than inviting promises, genuinely understood,—we should be anxiously concerned for those Riches, that the world can neither give, nor take away.

14 NO 63

ESSAY XXII.

O N

LEARNING.

W 3



ON
LEARNING.

ESSAY XXII.

“ ——— Nil mi officit unquam,
“ Ditiore hic, aut est quia doctior : ” ———

“ Quam scit, uterq; libens, censebo exerceat artem.
HORACE.

“ Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.”
VIRGIL.

IMMURED between the unfulfilled beauties of nature, and the splendid embellishments of art; — environed by science, — and encompassed by knowledge; Learning shines conspicuously great. — To enrich the mind, is to lay up treasure that diffuses its benign influence through every intellectual faculty; — whereas the food of sensual appetite serves rather to contaminate than support.

W 4

port. Formed for nobler ends than mere existence, the mind is rendered capable of receiving, to enable it to dispense.

Such has been the infinite wisdom of the great Creator, that we acquire that by degrees, which, if obtained at once, would be less esteemed. For notwithstanding the improvements made by the moderns in polite literature, Learning can be acquired only by degrees. Study and attention are the means, nor is the mind immediately, but gradually mature to comprehend it.—Youth is a period allotted for this purpose, as being more susceptible of those necessary impressions, and more difficult to be eradicated; and likewise less agitated or influenced by secular concerns in such a degree as to impair the memory; which in more advanced age we are liable to.

Learning flourishes at different times in various countries, but we find by ancient history, that the Orientals were primarily

primarily favoured with it. Notwithstanding science is the luminary of the mind, yet it hath frequently eclipsed the glory of nations by its prevalency. When it flourished most in Rome, its inhabitants were rapidly declining,—for it is the fore-runner of refinement, which is the progenitor of luxury, and that has proved the harbinger of ruin to a nation in every age of time.

Before we enter into a more particular discussion of this subject, must briefly consider the state of Learning in past ages. When Alexander possessed himself of Babylon, the Chaldeans boasted to Calisthenes, that their observations of the stars were then 470,000 years old. But there is not any thing, says an ingenious writer, extant of the Chaldean astrology more ancient than the æra of Nabonassar, which began in the 13,967th year of the Julian period. The invention of arts among the Chaldeans, is generally ascribed to Zoroaster, a contemplator of the stars. Josephus testifies

tifies that Berofus introduced among the Grecians, the writings of the Chaldeans, concerning aftronomy and philofophy.— Learning was now introduced among the Perfians by Zarades, a Perfian, who feems to have lived in the time of Hyftafpas, the father of Darius, who was cotemporary with Cyrus. All professors of Learning amongst the Perfians, were termed Magi. Thefe Magi continued down their Learning within their own families from one age, to another, and after a fucceffion of many ages, became fo numerous, that they made a complete nation, and poffeffed a country peculiar to themfelves. “ Where Solomon’s wife,”
 “ dom, fays an ancient author, is faid to
 “ have excelled all the fons of the Eaft,
 “ it is underftood of the Arabian philo-
 “ fophers: for the Jews call Arabia the
 “ Eaft country.” *Vide* Gen. x. 30, and xxv. 18.

Thales, the wife man of Miletus; ftands firft on the roll of ancient fages, and was the firft author of natural philofophy

fophy and mathematics among the Grecians. Socrates, who stands second, gave philosophy a new turn, and considered man as the only subject of it. Plato made considerable improvements in Learning; and Aristotle established a school at Athens, after being preceptor to Alexander. But after all, among the ancients, none were more esteemed for their Learning than the Egyptians; but the astonishing improvements since, are evident by the abolition of hieroglyphicks, that were used by that people.

Thus having given a brief account of the state of Literature in remoter periods, without attending farther to history, shall proceed to consider what is implied in the term Learning. Science, or skill in any thing, is chiefly included, hence it is that we must be cautious in distinguishing it from wisdom; which is a faculty of discerning between good and evil. The appellation is generally applied to scientific knowledge; a man is generally

generally deemed learned who is a proficient in the languages, and an adept in the sciences,—or skilful chirurgically, or legislatively; but it is seldom applied to mechanics.—So prepossessed are many in favour of literary knowledge, that without an extensive degree of it, they suppose a man incapable of pursuing any of the liberal professions.

There are useful and pernicious tendencies in Learning. The useful are those that inform in points where instruction is necessary; and the pernicious are those that lead to doubtful disputation, where nothing can be positively ascertained, and where the more we know, the more we are perplexed. Sir Thomas Pope Blount says, “ Learning does but serve to fill us full of artificial errors. The Romans were so far from esteeming it as an essential part of wisdom, that with them the word scholar was seldom used, but by way of reproach.”

Common

Common observation declares there are many uninformed scholars, pardon the seeming paradox, who if you converse with in a manner different to what they have learned, they are altogether ignorant. The artificer, or the mechanic have no need of this borrowed light to instruct them in commercial knowledge, it is reserved for those who are more curious to pry into mysteries.—Learning is thus far of use to the theologian, it teaches him to speak with propriety, consistency, and reason; considered morally, it also enables him to view sacred truths in the original, and to give the best literal construction;—but as to the doctrines, principles, and truths of religion;—it gives him *no* information. “The eternal God
 “ takes of the foolish things of this
 “ world, to confound the wise and
 “ learned.”

Learning, though it informs the judgment, cannot influence the practice;—and though all the morality of the ancients may have passed under our notice,
 yet

yet it cannot teach us of itself to chuse good and reject evil;—there needs a facility of discernment, more than the sublimest attainments in literature can afford.—Instead of being the assistant, it frequently proves the assailant of truth;—and actuated by what is called rational principles, Deists and others will deny;—what by reason they cannot disprove. Error generally originates with the learned, who are best capable of defending it, and from this source have arisen many dangerous heresies.—Seneca gives his opinion thus, concerning the liberal Sciences, that “they only
 “prepare the understanding, without
 “detaining it.”

Learning considered as preparatory to something successive, depends greatly on the alliance for the good or ill effects. If annexed to good principles, it will happily issue in defending truth from error; but if allied with base and abandoned principles, the ill effect will be seen by the support of those.

Learning

Learning was designed to strengthen the inherent powers of ratiocination,—to fortify the judgment so as to repel the vigorous efforts of opposition,—to elucidate a matter for the instruction of others ;—or to discover natural remedies for natural evils.——Now as refined Learning has a direct tendency to render the participant aspiring in his views :—hence it is rather an injury in some avocations, where the attention should be employed on different objects. Again, Learning, however conspicuous, very rarely meets its reward, for the very character exalts above pity, and debases below assistance. So that the man of Learning, if indigent, must remain so, till suitable means of assistance offer ; for it is deemed derogatory to the scholar, to stoop to such menial offices, as the more illiterate would be commended for performing. For a man to live by his wits, is in fact to starve ; but yet Learning still is the key of knowledge, and the road to honour and applause.

Sir

Sir Thomas Pope Blount says, “ some
 “ are of opinion that where Learning
 “ and knowledge go in the front, pride
 “ and ambition always follow in the
 “ rear.” Where this is the case, it gives
 birth to that despicable character called
 a pedant, or one who is ever seeming to
 know more than others.—Lord Chesh-
 terfield says, “ wear your Learning like
 “ your watch, in a private pocket, and
 “ do not pull it out, and strike it, merely
 “ to shew that you have one.” “ No
 “ wonder then, says an ancient author,
 “ that the Italians, in their farces,
 “ always bring in a pedant for the fool
 “ of the play.

Learning is by no means requisite to
 make men honest,—wise,—or virtuous;
 good subjects,—or good members of so-
 ciety;—but is never so properly con-
 sidered as when under the character of
 finery, or ornamental decoration, that
 is not essential to the well-being of the
 thing, or person so decorated, but serves
 to adorn and beautify. It is the embel-
 lishment

lishment of the mind, and an honour to the possessor; it introduces men into company, when no other recommendation would; and renders a person a fit companion for men of Learning and abilities. It is too frequently seen, that the best things are perverted to the worst purposes; and this is too often the case with regard to Learning, which gives occasion for considering it under these circumstances, an evil, or of evil tendency; for of itself, it is the happy assistant of natural genius, and the refinement and enlargement of natural conception.—Since then, when properly applied it is of singular utility, let us not place our dependance on it, or derive merit from it; but considering it as the glass of depraved intellectuals, we should not always abide by its decision, or deny what it cannot prove. For as we receive it of creatures, the discernment is sensual,—consequently its discoveries are only to our senses; but where spiritual requirements, declarations, and narrative, with which revelation abounds,

are above the comprehension of our senses, let us not pass a finite denial on the veracity of that which is infinite, since we are intellectually sensual, and that is intrinsically spiritual.—Though we may have waded through the mighty ocean of scientific knowledge, or attained the sublimest heights of literature; it will be a constant proof of our real Learning to confess that we know but little.

The advantages of a liberal education are too obvious to be denied, and too numerous to admit, in the districts of brevity, a specific mention. But the importance of education arises from two causes,—the frame of our mind,—and the objects we are conversant with.—With respect to the former, we are susceptible of various impressions,—strong prejudices,—and prepossessions;—imagination wings its way to the remotest regions, and unbridled fancy embraces every thing that is adapted to its nature. Before reason is mature, and too often after,

after, we believe what we are told, and consider every thing as true or false, on the character and authority, or rather according to our ideas of him who says it.

If then we are capable of being moulded, in a restrictive sense, into almost any form, or susceptible of any impressions, it becomes a matter of the highest importance, not only that men are educated, but *how* they are educated. Perhaps as much depends on the manner of it, as on the thing itself. It will indeed display the wisdom of him who teaches, not only to represent virtue as necessary, but as amiable, and it is not improbable, but a very capital defect in this instance has been productive of many evil consequences. We are sooner attracted by the charms of any thing, than convinced by its importance, because passion predominates over reason. If desirous to convince the judgment of the excellencies of virtue, we may ap-
X 2 peal

peal to facts which exhibit the deformities of vice, and fear and observation may operate effectually.—Relative duties, perhaps, cannot be better enforced than by shewing what constitutes civil society, and how far each individual that composes it, is interested in the common welfare. Obedience and submission to superiors, and such as are in authority,—the advantages of legislation,—government and civil protection, are easily exhibited by a review of the past, in history, and observation of the present benefits enjoyed.—To exalted characters, potentates and the like, education is of unspeakable importance, not merely as it furnishes them with scientific knowledge, but as it gives them a just idea of the rights of mankind,—the natural claim of princes to the allegiance of the subject, and the natural claim of the subject to the protection of the prince.

Education, though it should assist us in discriminating between truth and error,
yet

yet a fatal management has sometimes defeated those valuable designs, and solely given birth to every error in judgment. This will ever be the case where our own conceptions are represented as the standard of truth, and men affect to disbelieve what they cannot fully explore. If principles invariably regulate the manners, what is imbibed is essential to that end. As good and evil are terms too often arbitrarily applied, and usurpation evinces itself with frequency,—the justice of our sentence will depend in our view, on the earliest notions we receive.—If then the choice is directed almost universally by education, with a kind of irresistible impulse, we can never be too cautious in a matter that is to determine, not only the present, but future welfare of men. The objects we are daily conversant with, are invincible proofs of the importance of education, since vice assails us in such varied forms, and pleasure assumes so many different names.

The different interests of men occasion them to espouse some favourite cause, which by every possible means they endeavour to render agreeable to others, and the most candid and ingenious are gratified by making proselytes to their own opinion. Hence in order to discriminate with accuracy, the best information is requisite; and this education will necessarily furnish us with. Error may be said to tyrannize over the ignorant, and bribe the learned, for with respect to the former, of them it requires implicit faith; but with regard to the latter, it eludes their keenest observation, by the lulling opiates, either of sophistry or florid declamation. There are many ways by which the mind is enslaved, but none so liable to that vassalage as the illiterate and uninformed.

A proper education will teach us, in a great degree, to place a just value on others, and to entertain proper notions of ourselves, to consider not only that it is a pleasure

pleasure to please—but to be esteemed by such, whose favour is both our honour and advantage, it will never pervert the order of nature by an unbecoming effrontery, or lead us even to forget that after all we have learned, we are still comparatively ignorant. If cultivation will improve a bad soil, and convert the desert into a fruitful plain, Learning will transplant us from the wilds of ignorance, into the well ordered gardens of science, where we shall constantly reap the fruits of industry and perseverance.

14 NO 63

ESSAY XXIII.

O N

PHILOSOPHY.



O N

PHILOSOPHY.

ESSAY XXIII.

Stoice post damnum sic vendas omnia plaris
Quâ me stultitiâ (quoniam non est genus unum)
Infanire putas? ergo nam videor mihi sanus.

HORACE, *Sat. iii. Lib. ii.*

———— Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
Majus opus moveo.

VIRGIL, *Æneid. Lib. vii.*

NOT all the united powers of reason
or eloquence,—the furthest stretch
of thought,—or the sublimest expanse of
contemplation; could ever naturally
solve this laconic, yet comprehensive
question—*What is man?*

Immersed in the depths of ignorance,
and confined within the limits of sug-
gestion,

gestion, the task appeared impracticable ; —but reason, willing to exert its utmost, introduced—Philosophy.

According to historians, we find that Greece knew nothing of learning, 'till Thales, the Milesian, having travelled into Eastern countries, taught the Grecians polite literature. After a long night of ignorance science dawned, and the untutored ancient ultimately basked in the meridian day of information.— At that time the professors of learning, namely Thales, and six more, were called Wisemen. But not long after, Pythagoras disclaimed the title, as being peculiar to God, and modestly assumed that of a Lover of Wisdom : And the word Philosophy has prevailed ever since.

This science, according to Seneca, is divided into moral,—natural,—and rational. The causes of things fall under
natural

natural Philosophy,—arguments under rational,—and actions under moral.—Natural Philosophy treats concerning things corporeal and incorporeal,—the disquisition of causes and effects,—and the contemplation of the cause of causes. Rational Philosophy is divided into logic and rhetoric, the one looks after words, sense, and order, the other, rhetoric, treats barely of words and the significations of them.

“ Philosophy, according to Plato, is
 “ a disengagement of the soul from the
 “ body, or a desire of wisdom, which
 “ consists in the knowledge of things di-
 “ vine and human. So that a true Phi-
 “ losopher must have a natural capacity
 “ for conceiving intellectual essences,—
 “ a natural acuteness and a good me-
 “ mory,—a natural affection to truth
 “ and justice,—a mastery over the pas-
 “ sionate part;—and a liberal mind un-
 “ dervaluing corporeal pleasure.”—The
 pre-requisites for a Philosopher were
 indeed very great, and such as not the
 utmost

utmost extent of reason could produce. Every means that nature could suggest was sought, but all proved ineffectual, for nothing less than supernatural power can govern the passions;—restrain the inordinate inclinations of the mind;—or properly philosophize the conduct.—While nature retains its original depravity, it will be found morally impossible for the intellectual faculties, which are naturally vitiated, to govern the passions by *moral suasion*; for this has failed in innumerable instances;—and indeed in those very persons, who contend for this rational self-legislation.—The soul, even supposing it to be pure and immaculate, while connected so closely with the body, which is allowedly earth or sensual, cannot, according to the nature of things, disengage itself from the animal system, since their interests are common,—their welfare and support mutual.

This disengagement, which Plato contends for as a principal branch of Philosophy, is inconsistent and absurd, for the
same

same Philosopher acknowledges the soul hath three parts, Reason,—Appetite,—and Passion. Now according to his own way of reasoning, since appetite and passion are two principal parts hereof, how can it be so disengaged from the body, which is the promoter of the two chief parts of it?

This mysterious division results, according to Plato, in contemplation of intelligible beings, and so assimilating us to the Deity,—and being performed without the mediation of the senses.—But upon further enquiry we find, that he calls intellect, natural knowledge, when the soul is immersed in matter, therefore unless that union, only separable by death, between those near companions, could take place, it is impossible for all the united powers of Philosophy to effect a disengagement of the soul from the body, as shall issue in this uninterrupted contemplation.—This is meant as a brief description of one of the

the most notorious absurdities in heathen Philosophy.

“ That science, according to Plato,
 “ which teaches us to reason or dispute,
 “ is called dialectic,” as will be more particularly discussed hereafter; but we proceed now to this Philosopher’s definition of the soul of man, which he says, “ being of a divine original, was
 “ placed as a prince and governor in the
 “ head. There was a necessity, says he,
 “ of separating the reasonable and passionate parts of the soul, because the
 “ one being employed upon intelligible
 “ objects, and managable by discipline,
 “ is disagreeable and repugnant to the
 “ other, which is passive and formed by
 “ habitual practice.” Thus it was the opinion of Plato that the rational part of the soul would keep the passions in due subordination.

The absurdity of this will appear by the prior acknowledgment of this Philosopher, that appetite and passion formed
 two.

two parts out of three of the soul, consequently their power and influence must be greater than the rational, which constitutes only one. Besides the will is a more powerful principle than reason, and from the existence of reason, it is plain the will is vitiated; otherwise it would have needed *no* guide. This position being clearly demonstrated, it proves the insufficiency of moral suasion to regulate the will and affections, and consequently of Philosophy also. Plato proceeds to observe, that “ fate does “ not oblige us to do such and such “ actions, else it would destroy free- “ will.”—The inconsistency,—absurdity, and contradiction of this remark, is so glaringly evident, that it scarcely needs refutation.

What is fate but a positive,—definitive,—and unalterable decree of something that must inevitably come to pass? If so, how is the will consulted herein? That which is determined by an omnipotent being, *must* and will be effected.

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if

If fate does not oblige or compel, draw, or induce the will, it is no longer fate. The will is made subservient to its purposes; therefore, although it may acquiesce, it is in consequence of supernatural agency;—and destroys free-will, as to any thing spiritual and intrinsically good.

If good and evil are set before men, and they in general reject the former and accept the latter,—either that which is good does not carry its own evidence with it,—or men have no inclination or power *naturally* to receive it. One of these alternatives must certainly be the case, and either of them is sufficient to prove that we are enslaved by vice.—“ Whatsoever any created substance is, “ says an ingenious writer, it is not *of* “ *itself*, but is by the good pleasure of “ its creator.”—Admitting this assertion to be true, how must we reason concerning free agency?

The

The state of man determines in a great degree, the propensities of the mind,—for while we continue in the same condition, morally, in which we were born, it is easily demonstrated that we make choice only of *evil*; but if we are renewed in the temper of our minds,—then we are *free* in the performance of good, because we are the subjects of a different nature, which consequently produces different effects.

Man is a frail and mutable being, if then the purposes decreed by fate, depended upon a changeable will, there could be no certainty of their performance, which would subvert the literal design of fate, that admits of no failure or omission. The Philosophers all reasoned in this manner, as do many of their Deistical adherents in this day also; but their argument reduces it to one simple point, that they would circumscribe the power of the Deity who is infinite, by, and to that which is finite. Thus Plato's assertion remains self-refuted in contending

Y 2 for

for fate and the power of man's free-will; whereas the existence of one, destroys the other, as much as a flood of water would quench the flame that might oppose it.

Aristotle acknowledged that the sensual part of the will, oftentimes overrules the other, though superior to it in the order of nature. Sufficient proof this of the prevalency of inherent and original depravity.

Some compare Philosophy to a field, of which physics are the soil,—ethics the fruit,—and logic the fence. Others to an egg, of which logic is the shell,—physics the white, or nourishment,—and ethics the yolk, or chicken. Others, alluding to the inseparableness of its parts, compare it to a living creature, of which physics is the blood and flesh,—logic the bones and nerves,—and ethics the soul.

To take a general review of the system of Philosophy, adopted by the Stoics, according to Zeno, we find they say,
 “ that

“ that when the soul, moved by the
 “ natural appetite, pursues any object,
 “ it is either moved equally and accord-
 “ ing to reason, which is called joy, or
 “ immoderately, which is called pleasure.
 “ As deformity may remain, when sick-
 “ nels and infirmity are over; so the vi-
 “ tious habits of the mind continue,
 “ when the turbulent motion of the
 “ passions is abated for a time.”——If
 such is the residue of abated passions,
 whence can we derive, or how contend
 for, innate purity and rectitude? The
 defect undoubtedly lies somewhere, and
 vice, like a contagion, has impaired the
 powers of the soul, which by reason of
 that, are become naturally incapacitated
 to resist evil.

According to the Stoics, during the
 serenity of mental peace, “ the vicious
 “ habits,” of what? Of a defect or de-
 viation from reason? No, the vicious
 habits of the mind remain.——Accord-
 to Plato, “ the soul had a being before
 “ the body,” therefore to take them on

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their

their own principle of reasoning, depravity must consequently be natural and inherent; and this being proved from their own acknowledgments,—the validity of free-will,—chusing good and rejecting evil, and governing the passions by Philosophy, falls entirely to the ground; since Zeno speaks of remaining vice in the mind, or vitiated habits.

The Sceptic Philosophers did not prefer the apprehensions of men before those of the other animals, which they term irrational, and very shrewdly introduce instances of sagacity in the brute creation; who know their own real welfare. Shall we then suppose that the boasted powers of man, which are depraved, can effect a work that requires the exertion or agency of Omnipotence itself? Forbid the thought!—Philosophy at best can be no more than precept,—and without the will is made subservient, it will never be put in practice. The extent of Philosophy is nature, and
here

here, it is lost in wonder,—and confused in mystery.

As it was by man invented, how can it inform us concerning God? Idea is its common agent, and mere suggestion its support,—the one is immersed in matter,—and the other exposed to an intellectual chaos. Causes are proved by their effect, and subjects are reduced to our comprehension, by the light of nature, and the rudiments of reason.

Philosophy, according to Epicurus, “ is the exercise of reason in order to “ a happy life.” The same Philosopher treats thus concerning the canons of the will,—“ All pleasure unmixed “ with pain is to be embraced: All “ pain unaccompanied with pleasure is “ to be avoided.”—He places the chief good in virtue, and directs to the observance of the paths of reason, as the means to procure felicity. The Philosophers in general agreed in their opi-

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nions

nions of man, as a being of natural purity and rectitude;—capable of discerning between, and also of chusing good, or rejecting evil. The light of nature being their only directory, their maxims were in general founded on such principles as they supposed adapted to nature, and were more likely to promote the good of society, than to excite desires of any knowledge of futurity.—By observing their prescribed rules, they deemed it being assimilated to the Deity; whom they ignorantly worshipped, and concerning whom they were totally blind, for want of the light of revelation,

Philosophy by the Heathens was no less intended to form the conduct, than to fortify the mind against adversity in all its most hideous forms. But in this instance it failed greatly, there required something more than mere Philosophy to support man in trouble and distress.—This science is deservedly admired in those branches of it that relate to logic
and

and rhetoric ; but with regard to Ethics or moral Philosophy, it serves only to shew us how exceeding ignorant the wisest of men are, respecting human nature ; when left to the mere dictates of abstract reasoning. — Natural religion may be compared to the lanthorns we use on a dark night, that afford only a particular discovery, whilst the greatest part remains in its original darkness.

Philosophy, as respecting man, is indeed the religion of nature, acting by opinion and guided by sense. “ Virtue, “ according to Aristotle, is founded upon “ nature.” — A direct contradiction this to the Christian system of Philosophy, since revelation authorizes us to assert that vice is founded upon nature, and virtue only founded upon grace.

Having in general terms described the received opinions of the most eminent Philosophers, shall proceed to oppose a Christian system of Philosophy, to that
adopted

adopted by the Heathens,—on the principles of Reason and Revelation.

Were we to consult the oracles of truth,—the dictates of reason,—and the testimonies of experience; we should find in each of them a description of human nature, widely different from what we meet with in heathen Philosophy. Assertions without proofs are vague,—absurd,—and useless, but where unquestionable evidences are given, it is altogether irrational to deny. In the sacred writings we are told concerning man, “that there is *none* that doeth “good, no not one,” that “all men “have sinned, and come short of the “glory of God;” and reason declares the human heart to be the receptacle and source of all iniquity, since no effect can be produced without a cause. Experience loudly testifies the numerous abominations that are found in the best of men,—to the utter confusion of these who contend for,—and the entire refutation

tation of the absurd, though admired doctrine of moral rectitude.

If Philosophy is the love of wisdom, let us attend to the words of the wisest of men, respecting human nature, “For
“there is not a just man upon earth,
“that doeth good and sinneth not.”—
Thus spake Solomon, who, though a man, sustained as much dignity as it was possible for depraved nature to support, and yet we do not find him contending for it either in himself or others.

If time had ever produced instances, or nature proved effects of perfection in man, we might have been inclined to credit the pleasing tale of human dignity;—but as it is allowed on all hands that God created man perfect, and as not only revelation, but instances confirm the universal imperfection of man, certainly there must have been a fall from this original purity and innocence. This proves itself.—The next thing to
be

be considered is, how far man, as a fallen creature, can have a power or will to choose good and reject evil?

There is perhaps nothing so well founded on reason that meets with more opposition from the self-righteous Philosopher, than the conclusion that may be drawn from the above-mentioned premises.—Philosophy is the grand means made use of to destroy this truth, which is as firm as the basis on which it is built. If we acknowledge the fall of man, we suppose him by reason thereof as much dead to any thing good, naturally, as an inanimate substance would be incapable of action. Objectors against this capital truth urge, our making man a *mere machine*, which they conceive absurd in the nature of it.—But for instance, if a diseased person, for vice is compared to a disease, although weak and helpless, was deemed capable of acting, would it not be thought extremely absurd? And how much more
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so is it, when vice has impaired every faculty of the soul, to suppose it naturally capable of chusing good?

It is well known, to revert to the former simile, that a sick person without assistance from others can do nothing, and if so, is it not equally rational and philosophic to say that man, who is dis-tempered and debilitated by sin, has no power of his own to do any thing spiritually good.

To reason with the Philosophers on their own principles, and allow man to be a free agent, we must enquire what necessity there was for government,—law,—and discipline, if man is thus capable of self-legislation? Why are not all men left to their own discretion, their free-will and so forth?——It was because man ceased to be a spiritual agent that there was a necessity for restraint to be put upon him. Supposing a man to be left to his own free-will, and could have all things necessary to supply him with,
there

there would not be an evil that he would hesitate to commit.—Whatever seeming asperity such an assertion may convey, or however grating to the tender ear, yet let observation testify the truth.—Why are we so jealous of every increase of power and prerogative among men? The reason is obvious,—because we are apprehensive of their *abuse* of it.

Had the great Creator of the universe acknowledged his creatures capable of chusing good and rejecting evil, is it not surprizing that he should put a restraint upon their wills?—Whenever evil is committed, there man's free-will is exemplified.—This is agreeable to the Philosophy of the Bible, that eternal standard of truth and wisdom!

That unparalleled system of Philosophy or wisdom, contained in the scriptures, includes man under the idea of a fallen creature, by nature so far from having a will to do good, that he is at enmity against God: hence it is St. Paul
faith

faith, "And that he might reconcile
 "both unto God in one body by the
 "cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 From hence it appears, there is an absolute necessity for a renovation or change of nature, in order to this free agency in any degree whatever.

Where this happy change takes place it effects *more* than Philosophy ever can,—since the will and affections are changed from the love of vice to the love of virtue, and though the will is passive as to this change, yet it is made active through divine assistance, and in this and no other sense, can man, either scripturally or rationally, be said to be invested with power even over his own will.—An act of the mind can never be spontaneous, unless wholly divested of any restraint or bias,—therefore the natural propensities to which we are physically as well as morally subject, renders us *free* only to that which we are inclined unto.—Hence man is a free agent,—but to what? Observation will
 speedily

speedily inform us. Though it is indispensibly requisite to have the concurrence of the will, in the accomplishment of an act, yet our will is inclined by that being, who disposes of all things at his pleasure, to the performance of good,—and we are guided by our own inclinations in the practice of evil.—We are not therefore to suppose from what is here signified, that man is in *no* sense free to chuse good or evil,—but only that a predilection for the latter is an effect of his depraved nature; and his choice of the former, as an invariable consequence of renovating power, *makes* him free in the practice of virtue.

As Philosophy affords a refuge to the Deists among various other Antichristian systems, shall now proceed briefly to animadvert on the various absurdities of Deism.

To believe nothing but what can be reduced to their comprehension, is a general maxim with those sons of speculation.

lation. The Philosophers in general did the same, 'till they came to contemplate the Divine Nature, when the further they enquired, the more they were perplexed, infomuch that a considerable number of them varied, respectively, in their opinions, till one, more atheistical than the rest, denied the Being of *any*. Now, if Philosophy can give no information of the Deity, as to his nature and attributes, it is the height of folly to deny revelation for want of *comprehending* it, when they can form no conception even of its Divine Author.—Again, since the principles of Philosophy vary so greatly respecting the attainment of the ultimate end, or chief good, as they term it, and can come to no certain conclusion; it is a reflection upon their rule, Philosophy, a science most assuredly precarious!—to suspect the authenticity of revelation, on account of seeming improbabilities.

Philosophy, though a science much admired, and almost generally among the learned pursued, yet without ne-

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cessary

cessary restrictions, is the foundation of error, and the source of moral delusion. For instance, there cannot be a greater absurdity than to talk of a fallen creature's *meriting* divine favour, for although one man may, and certainly does merit of another; yet it is more unreasonable to suppose that a transgressor can have any claim on divine mercy upon the score of *merit*, than it is to imagine an offender against the laws of his country can have a *just* claim on the royal clemency. We should deem a convict guilty of the highest presumption who was to plead his own *worthiness* to obtain a pardon, when he had been *justly* condemned as *guilty*; and much greater presumption is it in man, however exemplary, since *all* men have sinned, to seek forgiveness and acceptance on account of his worthiness, when we are told, that after all our best services, we are but “*unprofitable servants*.”—Here then is another proof of the inconsistency of some Ethical systems.—For want of properly discriminating, various misapprehensions

prehenſions have ariſen, and a truth founded on fact and experience, has been charged with a licentious tendency; when it is notorious that *true morality* can never have a permanent being in that man who has *false* notions of *himſelf*. We ſhould remember that the doctrine of human merit is a two-fold argument,—in relation to the Deity inadmiſſible on every principle of reaſon,—with reſpect to ſociety, ſelf-evident.

As the particular deſign of this ſcience was to form the conduct and regulate the manners, but for want of ſuperior aid, frequently became a mere fruitleſs precept, we ſhall attend briefly to that change of heart and conduct which the Philoſophy of revelation is productive of. —Vice, that univerſal foe, that once predominantly ruled,—compelling every faculty of the mind into its infernal ſervice,—bending the will,—exciting the affections,—and kindling deſire to evil, is now ſubdued by power infinite,—and grace divine !

As Aristotle considered the will in a two-fold nature, including the rational and sensual parts,—so also while nature remains in any degree, a conflict will exist between the opposing principles of the mind, which St. Paul calls “the law of his mind warring against the law of his members.” Therefore vice is not eradicated, but in consequence of this change is repelled by *derived* virtue. Envy in its sable garb, with piteous and distressing mien, that feign would veil the glittering orb of bliss, with dark tempestuous clouds, is now transformed into a beam of love that penetrates the remotest corners of the earth. Pride, that devouring locust, which preys on intellective reason,—contaminates the senses,—debilitates the will, is *changed* into the admired flower of humility, and transplanted into the garden of eternal love. Self, that once claimed the imperial chair of dignity, now seeks the lowest form of mercy. Profit, once sought, but never found, is at once obtained and freely given. Pleasure, the
object

object of insatiable desire that vice could never yield, is now received,—enjoyed,—maintained with permanency divine. Reason, once darkened by the clouds of sin,—impaired through reigning vice,—is now restored unto a perfect day,—and to abiding strength. Once employed in questioning revealed truths,—now arduous to defend them;—once denying what it could not see,—but now believing *all* that heaven reveals. Felicity the end of all, though vainly sought by most, is freely given to the heirs of bliss, and the subjects of renewing grace.

Such effects as these, all the Philosophy of the ancients could never have produced,—but the Philosophy which is of divine authority is made subservient to these happy purposes; and affords that which alone can satisfy an immortal mind. —Philosophy presents us with a set of precepts that are not operative or influential, or such as can conform the will to the practice of virtue. It represents man altogether different from

what experince declares him to be,—it enjoins the performance of duties he is utterly incapable of performing;—and finally gives no clear or explicit account of the power,—perfection,—and attributes of the Deity. It acknowledges the immortality of the soul, and yet proportions its nourishment by a mortal limit. It comes to no certain conclusion of what is felicity, or how it is to be obtained;—but is divided into various notions and opinions.—If such is Philosophy, let us not seek information respecting human nature where it is not to be found, or deny what it does not admit, since it is built on depraved reason and mere suggestion.

If this science implies a love of wisdom, — and its ancient professors were dignified with the appellation of wise,—let us have recourse for precept and direction to the sacred oracles of unerring wisdom, where we shall behold a rational,—consistent,—and unparalleled system of inspired Philosophy!

ESSAY XXIV.

O N

ETHICS.



ON
ETHICS.

ESSAY XXIV.

——— Quæ possit facere & servare beatum.

HORACE, 1. E. G. 2.

AMONG the various systems that engage our notice and attention,—none probably are more shackled with prejudices and prepossessions than those which relate to the *manners* of mankind. Of the vast numbers who professedly investigate the nature and design of things, but few judge of them in their several abstract properties.—Certain principles are particularly favourable to peculiar dispositions, and grow or increase in their influence proportioned to the dictates of inclination.—Policy invariably prescribes the practice of temperance and moderation,—discipline and order,—patience and perseverance,—by
the

the rule of interest and advantage.—But the law of *partial* benefit, cannot determine the rectitude of *any* and *every* thing.

Hence arises the fallacy of most of our determinations,—and without discriminating, we frequently place the *cause* for the *effect*.——For instance, when anarchy fostered by faction,—and abetted by the arm of sedition, diffuses its malign influence abroad, we rashly ascribe it to oppression and the like; but this ostensible plea being discovered, proves the *effect* and *not* the *cause* of sedition. There are also many cases, in which, without knowing the *motives*, we cannot properly judge of an action, for to determine its nature by its relation, is in fact to dispossess it of any nature at all. Good and evil attend most things;—but what might prove injurious in its relation to some,—with respect to others, would evince itself highly beneficial.

Reason among men,—and instinct in the brute creation,—incline each *naturally*

rally to the conservation of their several species. From this source originated the laws of civil society,—and primarily gave birth to manners; but like other things which undergo a variety of changes,—custom and education have also diversified in these instances; and the *wisdom* of one century is considered as *folly* in another.—“According to Homer, says “Mr. Rollin, every thing in general is “derived from the Gods,”—An acknowledgment this, well worthy a heathen,—and excepting the plurality of deities,—one that no less becomes a Christian.

In this brief reviewal of Ethics it will be first necessary to consider *man* in three relations,—to the Deity,—himself,—and others.—As the mind is most abidingly impressed by those object with which it is daily conversant,—let us view all nature in perfect subordination to its primeval cause of existence. The air, the medium of animal life, rendered salubrious or pestilential,—the clouds distilling

distilling their aquatic properties for the purpose of vegetation,—or uniting with terrific—sonorous explosion;—the light diffusing its material particles propagated from the sun,*—and the planets so arranged as to enrich the fable scene, and guide where otherwise they might destroy.

Can the earth spontaneously fructify without the aid of revolving seasons? Can the stately cedar rise to its accustomed altitude without the humidity of the vesper dew? Can that masterpiece of man's invention, the floating castle of the watery main, ride through the boisterous ocean, or gain the desired haven without a propitious gale? Can policy suggest,
or

* It is not worth while to enumerate the opinions of the Aristotelians—Cartesians—and others, about the nature of light; Aristotle making it a quality; Cartes a pulsion, or motion of the globules of the second element.—But with the moderns we take light to consist of material particles propagated from the sun, and other luminous bodies, not instantaneously, but in time.

Vide DERHAM'S Physic. Theology.

or penetration find, a means of security for the feathered tribe like the texture of nidification? Could even Galen disbelieve an antecedent cause, when he saw the skeleton of a man? Or rather—Can we be atheists in *any* sense, when we contemplate our *own* existence?

Thus, from what we see around us and in us, we may plainly discover our relation to the Deity as *dependent creatures*.—Instead of ascribing wisdom to ourselves, which we are too frequently apt to do,—it would be the greatest proof of our discernment, to seek in every action of our lives *superior guidance*.

Probably the idea of dependence, when verified by facts, may threaten the pretensions of some Ethical *refiners*, with the downfall of *their* scheme,—and by testimonies incontrovertible display their natural impotence and weakness. But viewing our relation to the Deity, we are not to confine it to dependence

pendence only, that serving to shew us likewise that we are *accountable* creatures.

The inadequate punishments and rewards in this life, are no small proof of a future day of general retribution,—and the knowledge of good and evil is also an evidence that we are *accountable*. The influence that this idea must have on our conduct is too apparent to be denied,—and the want of considering this, in a degree leads men to the practice of vice and immorality. Could oppression, —cruelty, —and persecution, triumph in the view of punishment?—Common sense forbids us to suppose it.

If we intrust any important concern in the hands of a person,—we naturally expect him to surrender an account of his proceedings in that instance;—and on every principle think ourselves authorized to *claim* it; so likewise when the munificent former of the universe commits the talent of *reason* to the use
of

of his creatures :—He has an undoubted and unequivocal right to demand a succinct detail of the *improvement* made of it.—*Man* in his relation to *himself*, is bound by the laws of nature ;—the first of which is *self-preservation*. By giving a due latitude to this principle, it will be found that virtue is coeval with it, or in other words, as soon as there is existence, there is a necessity for it, to administer to the safety of the person existing. An all-wise Being will infallibly secure obedience to his laws, and that sense in which nature unassisted obeys them, is evidently the result of *self-love*.

In objection to this it may probably be urged, that as *all* men do not implicitly obey the dictates of virtue,—and yet *all* are moved by self-love, virtue is *not* coeval with the first law of nature.—To this it may be replied,—that every act of vice being *felo de se*, or a species of suicide, the law of nature can never accede to, what militates against itself; but in-
fatuation

fatuation and stupidity lead men to that which their own reason would condemn.

Man is *physically free* to what he is *morally involuntary*,—the internal evidence which temperance and moderation bring to the animal frame in their vital operations, render a man in *that sense free* to the constant practice of them, when an athletic disposition, inflamed with the vigour of youth, by the predominance of passion, *necessitates* him to intemperance and excess. In the formation of man, what is most susceptible of injury, is attended with the greatest means of defence in nature.

Hence passion, as it were the vivid particles of man,—are modified by reason, and *partially* restrained by it. Yet so arduous is the task of self-government, that although interest,—safety,—and welfare,—are promoted by the regular practice of virtue; the rational part of man too frequently falls a victim to the sensual. Man then, in relation to *himself*, is a mixture

mixture of contradictions.—In the hour of serious contemplation he views the present as subservient to the future,—and the privation of animal life, as the avenue to bliss or misery.—But trace him to the chambers of festivity,—and there you behold him absorbed either in voluptuousness, or criminal indifference. Probably it may appear paradoxical to assert, that man in relation to *himself* is *his own enemy*.—False ideas of pleasure are as inimical to individuals, as political ignorance is in a state,—to those who aim at redressing grievances;—the former destroy themselves by extreme indulgence,—the latter accelerate ruin on the state by a desperate remedy.

Man is his own enemy by judging falsely of things,— and by adopting such a conduct regardless of all admonitions, as must inevitably prove detrimental to his *real* interest. How common is it for men to call that *benefit* which serves only to increase their power and influence, than which, nothing more likely proves

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a virtual injury! How common is it for men to call that *honour*,—which is only infamy in disguise! How common is it for men to call that *wisdom*, which evinces itself the extreme of folly! How frequently do men call that *happiness*, which eventually issues in misery.

Notwithstanding this is confessedly the case, the man who attempts to *undeceive* them is adjudged an *enemy*,—and every means is sought after to avoid him.—Man in relation to himself is *ignorant*.—With various surrounding objects he may be perfectly conversant,—of divers men and manners a competent judge;—but of *himself* he is utterly uninformed. And why?—Because he studies more to know what respects his neighbour than himself.

Innumerable failures are discerned,—and a multiplicity of evils anticipated concerning *others*; but though impending ruin warns him often, yet in his *own* apprehension he is in perfect safety.—

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That predilection which it is natural to conceive every one has for *himself*, issues in a partiality that extenuates where it should use the utmost severity of censure, and condemns where candour should be exerted. Man then in relation to *himself* inverts the mirror of self-enquiry,—represents deformity with all the symmetry of proportion,—vices with all the effulgent lustre of virtues,—rashness with the fervour of magnanimity ;—and obduracy with the stability of perseverance. As transcendent goodness appears illustriously conspicuous in the divine procedure,—so especially in that benevolent bond of union that subsists for the promotion of society ;—displayed in the relation which *one* man bears to *another*.

Whatever feeds of dissension some zealous partizans may industriously disseminate,—though competitors arise in almost every undertaking, and with a jealous eye guard against every trespass on their several claims to fame and favour ;—notwithstanding divisions may

take place:—Yet it is *one* interest, and *one* common cause in which the rational world are concerned.—Philanthropy infinite and super-eminent challenges our admiration and imitation. Shall *we* then do otherwise than love one another?—Can we wantonly distress an individual, or unfeelingly view the afflicted? Does not our primordial consanguinity enjoin us, by every tie sacred and common, to an observance of the laws of humanity? Certainly, for beneficence has pleasures which none but the generous know.—We mutually waft through the airy regions of space by means of the same sovereign conductor,—we are each assailed in our rotation by adversity,—and finally subject to dissolution. Contention then is both impolitic and absurd,—for we cannot injure or annoy one individual, without, in a greater or less degree, affecting society at large.—But, alas! facts and experience shew a fatal contrast of manners,—and we act towards each other as if *none* merited existence but *ourselves*.

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In subserviency to this general descant on Ethics, having shewn the three several relations to which man, concerning whom Ethics principally treats, naturally belongs, shall with the utmost brevity consider this subject *scientifically*.

It will afford a more plenary investigation of Ethics to view it as *discovered by*,—and *conformable to reason*.—Unassisted reason has very eminently displayed itself in the discoveries of the ancients, who, without any better medium of information, have traversed the rugged paths of Ethical enquiry. Homer has given us a most curious account of the heathen deities, whom he represents as reproaching and abusing each other,—that some of them are wounded in their disputes with men,—that lying and thieving are genteel practices among them,—and that they are guilty of all the vices incidental to human nature. When men are thus utterly ignorant of the true God, and imbibe such erroneous notions respecting the supreme legislator and

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disposer of events, it is natural to suppose their ideas of moral obligations are circumscribed and generally defective.—If the source be impure,—what flows from thence is necessarily defiled.

The Pythagoreans were of opinion that future rewards and punishments would be conferred or inflicted on man, in the form of some bird, beast, &c.—Epicurus indeed supposed that the actions of men, passed unobserved by the deities,—and that they were equally indifferent to their good or evil conduct.—Although Plato banished Homer from his commonwealth for his Mythology, as offending against the majesty of Heaven,—yet there is an apparent incongruity in his, Plato's, sentiments concerning the *will*, as *disinclined* to vice, when at the same time by precept he enforces the necessity of *avoiding* it; which is certainly superfluous if the mind is *naturally* averse to it.

Grotius says, “ The Greek philosophers

“ phers seem to take great pains to put a
“ virtuous name upon a vicious thing.”
Since the discoveries of the ancient sages
were so generally contracted, Aristotle
might well say, “ As the eyes of a bat
“ are dazzled at the light in the day-
“ time; so is the understanding in our
“ soul confounded at the plainest things
“ in the world.” — And Democritus
might with equal propriety observe,
“ That truth lay at the bottom of a well.”
A knowledge of the world led them to
the enacting laws for the common safety,
and reason taught them that men were
more likely to be awed by *interest*,—than
any *innate* principles of integrity.—For
every provision against the commission of
evil, is a tacit acknowledgment that it
may be committed;—and in this sense
the ancients had a feint idea of the depra-
vation of human nature.—Seeing the
discoveries of reason afford so little in-
formation, it may yield greater enter-
tainment to enquire wherein Ethics is
conformable to reason.

The attestation of *facts* and *experience* primarily evince its conformity,—the former is a testimony *without* us,—the latter an evidence *within* us.—Among the various undecided controversies of men,—a difference in *mode*, has occasioned a *seeming* difference in *substance*, when an appeal to *facts*, would have speedily and conclusively determined the matter.

A man necessarily believes what he *sees*,—though he may question what he *hears*. Ethics, or the doctrine of manners, as the best etymologists define it, is constantly explaining itself in the actions of men. Various pursuits,—but one end in all. The rich,—the poor,—the gay,—the retired,—the learned,—the illiterate,—the moral,—the immoral,—unitedly propose themselves eventual benefit or pleasure. The disappointments they severally meet with, do not invalidate this assertion. Ethics as a system or science, is so far *rational* as it is confirmed by *facts*.—No evidence can
be

be more satisfactory,—than what a man finds *within* himself.

Were we to address the infirm with eulogiums on their agility and strength, their *experience* would unveil the deception and expose our folly.—But as some fatally mistake *false* for *just* conceptions, it is requisite to observe that experience must coincide with facts, to be really genuine.—As many things assume the form of truth, without possessing the *reality*, there is a medium of information which deceives the majority of mankind, even—crediting what they think agreeable, and disbelieving whatever is unpleasing;—like some who only value a medicine for its *taste*, or persons by their *appearance*.—Quintilian observes, “ it “ is scarce possible that an expression “ should reach the heart when it begins “ with grating the ear, which is as it “ were its portico and avenue. On the “ other hand, a man is willing to hear “ what pleases him, and this induces “ him to believe what is said to him.”—

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By this rule of *fact* and *experience*, the many errors that have interwoven themselves with our systems of morality may be easily detected,—and the imposture display itself by its disagreement with nature and experience.

Ethics is rational, as it carries a *sensitive* evidence with it. Its conformity to reason, is further evinced by its *consistency*. An attentive view of the heathen moralists and others,—will soon convince us that they, in many instances, contradict themselves. But this science is perfect symmetry and proportion,—no confused mass of ideas,—no discordant sound,—but complete unison and harmony.—When we judge *rationally* of things,—our first enquiry is for the *evidence* or *effect*,—the next its agreement or disagreement. This consideration possibly inclined Lord Bolingbroke, so frequently to talk of an *association of ideas*.

That good or evil determine the nature of every action we perform,—that
virtue

virtue is the road to happiness,—vice the prelude of destruction,—that society and individuals are benefited by the former,—and essentially injured by the latter,—that our natural obligations require of us the practice of virtue,—that we exist not only for ourselves, but the good of others,—and that felicity is annexed to the performance of moral duties, is that which *reason* teaches, and which, with the united testimony of facts,—experience,—and uniformity, constitute *rational Ethics*.

The next thing to be considered is, that Ethics as a system is capable of, and will admit a considerable *extension*, for what is formed on the principles of *reason*,—is only an introduction to that which *theology* treats of;—perfectly agreeing with, yet exceeding the limits of a decision that relates chiefly to man, as a member of *civil society*.—The learned and ingenious Mr. Rollin says, “ The greatest and most important service that Philosophy can do for man, is

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“ to dispose him to receive whatever is
 “ taught by divine revelation with do-
 “ cility and respect.”

Theology is usually considered as a distinct science, but without desiring to offer any innovation on the rules of literature,—Ethics, it is presumed, may be inculcated on *theological* principles.—In the first instance the arguments are drawn from *reason only*,—in *this* from *revelation*; so that it is the present design briefly,—and has been so generally through the whole of *these* Essays, more or less, according to the nature of the subject, to endeavour to *evince* the *inseparable* union of *reason* and *revelation*, in matters of faith and practice,—or in other words,—as a system of truth and a code of precepts.

That there is a first cause, reason confesses,—and revelation confirms.—That *all* men are bound to obey that supreme Being, reason acknowledges,—revelation approves;—but as to the attributes of
 that

that Being,—what He requires of men, and how far we are capable of obeying, unassisted reason *cannot* inform us, but theology *fully* answers.

The latter science then is evidently an improvement on the former,—and perfects what in that is defective.—Whatever tends to the promotion of virtue, we are led, while under the influence of *true* reason, to acknowledge worthy our imitation, but the boundaries of mere ratiocination are too circumscribed to give ample scope to so extensive an enquiry.

The manners of mankind in relation to the Deity,—themselves,—and others, on the principles of *theology*, are regulated by *revelation* only, inculcating the necessity of obedience to the divine will in thought—word—and deed,—the practice of temperance and sobriety as to themselves,—and the constant effusions of universal benevolence to others.—The moral law admits of no compromise or diminution in its requirements—
nothing

nothing less than a *perfect* accomplishment of *all* that it demands can acquit the party, or mitigate its condemnatory sentence.

This presents us with a view of moral *good* and *evil*,—the elucidation of which may furnish some information.—Immaculate purity,—unfollied excellence, and native innocence,—are properties to which human nature *now* can lay *no* claim. A fatal contrast has produced those numerous calamities, with which the world in general abounds.—Hence in some degree the difficulty of judging rightly concerning the most desirable attainments.—*Moral good* is derivative,—*not* inherent as respecting man, since that which he is not *naturally* possessed of, he must *supernaturally* receive.—All ideas that we can possibly form of *intrinsic moral goodness*, must include the author and fountain of it,—and from that source,—by that means,—and through that influence it is *alone* we can become *good*.

Thus

Thus far respecting its relation to us creatures.—Considered in reference to actions abstractly,—the moral law is the only criterion.—But an act with respect to us is determinable by the *motive* that produces it,—and which, in fact, gives it being.—To this it may perhaps be objected,—as we judge of every cause by its effects,—so judge we of the actions of men;—but let it be observed, an act in its effects to others may be *bad*, when the *motive* that occasioned us to perform it may determine it *good* in us.—Neither can this justify licentiousness, because every *good* motive is accompanied by an *acquitting* conscience, whereas no one can plead that in practices that *naturally* condemn us. In acts of cruelty or immorality none with any credibility can plead the *purity* of their intentions,—for in order to determine an action good that we perform, we must be acquitted on *every* principle. There are certain acts where no man can possibly declare the rectitude of his intentions, and seeing that is the case, every objection to *this* species

species of definition is obviated. On the other hand, if moral good and evil is confined simply to the act itself,—how are we to judge in those cases, where there are a variety of external modes of effecting the same thing?—Would it not be bigotry in the extreme, to exclude *any* man as utterly impious,—because he pursued a different *mode* of worship from ourselves?—Is it the bare adherence to some prescribed rules,—that constitute *true* devotion, or is it the *motive*? If the former, it must be confined to *one* method; if the latter to *sincerity* alone. We have the highest authority to assure us, that it is the *intention*, which the sovereign former of the universe regards in the actions of men.—Hence the wisest legislators have criminated offenders, by the design they apparently had in offending.

Does patriotism, that hackneyed term, consist solely in *one* mode of procedure? Supposing it were so, we should find many who in *various* ways would claim
it.

it.—False lights are very frequently held out to the people at large,—and the *ostensible* object differs often widely from the *real* one.

The uninformed, who are generally enthusiastic, are guided by the meteors of popular delusion;—and like some, who have had those precarious luminaries for conductors, have ultimately fallen into destruction.—“ Because very frequently the positive idea of the action, and its moral relation, are comprehended together under one name, says Mr. Locke, and the same word made use of to express both the mode or action, and its moral rectitude or obligation; therefore the relation itself is less taken notice of; and there is often no distinction made between the *positive* idea of the action, and the *reference* it has to a rule.”—Hence adds this ingenious writer, the taking any thing from another without his knowledge or allowance, is *properly* called *stealing*; but the taking a sword out of

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the hands of a madman, in its relation to the divine law, admits of a different construction.—What then determines the nature of the act in *this* case but the *motive*?—On the other hand, such who would assert that moral good and evil is *self-existent*, must find themselves in a disagreeable predicament, if they attempt to account for the *origin* of it, since nothing can be the cause of itself. But as an insurmountable testimony of the *true* constituents of good and evil, we are told that “*unto the pure all things are pure, but to them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*” Tit. 1. 15.

This truth unmasks the vain pretensions of many, and often discovers hypocrisy under the veil of sanctity. “Do we try men’s faith by their persons?” says Tertullian, we should try their persons by their faith.”

If the sons of industry and perseverance
have

have failed in their endeavours to excel, it must be acknowledged that our success is not governed by the precarious decisions of men, but insured by the auspices of heaven.—Hence Demosthenes, in his harangue for Ctesiphon, says, “ Censure me Æschines for the advice I gave, do not asperse me for the event, for the supreme Being unravels and terminates every thing at pleasure.”

Were Stoicism irresistibly prevalent, and a blind fatality our universal creed, our hopes at best would be a fruitless effort of endurance ;—and our consolation a miserable uncertainty.—But a far more pleasing scene is exhibited, and from the opaque abodes of conjecture, rushes forth the perspicuity of truth ;—our borrowed powers strain every nerve in our behalf,—but at last implicitly yield to infallible guidance.—We view ourselves as men subject to various incidents, —depraved and mortal,—but we see likewise our *support* ;—we behold the road to never-ending felicity, *not* strewn

with sensual delights,—or immured between tranquillity and ease, but powerfully secured from every invader, beyond the reach of injury.

In the first stage of enquiry, Ethics appears descriptive of what we *ought* to be, on the principles of *reason*,—in the second, on those of *theology*, it shews us what *we are*;—in each virtue is pregnant with benefits,—replete with comforts,—and what serves to glorify God, is the only proper *dignity* of man!

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XXV.

O N

REASON.

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O N
R E A S O N.
E S S A Y XXV.

“ Nil agit exemplum litem quod lite resolvit.”

HORACE, *Sat. Lib. ii.*

WHEN power infinite spake all things into being, and nature silently obeyed, — when the confused chaos became a paradise, and plenty shone around; infallibility itself pronounced it *good*. But mercy, an attribute divine, extended its desires still further, to the formation of man; — a creature little below the Angels, — and far above the brute, as possessed of Reason. A dignity was here conferred, that while it loudly proclaimed the Creator's wisdom, fully testified his justice. For the endowment of a discerning faculty, argues the purity and goodness of its divine giver; and should silence every repining thought at the dispensations of Providence.

Providence.—The more we know of ourselves, the more we shall honour and adore the Almighty, not only for what he has conferred; but that he is not dealing with us according to the desert of our crimes.—If, as some assert, Reason is a light that will guide us into true knowledge; it will doubtless convince us of this.—The faculty of discerning between good and evil, which is the property of Reason, serves in every point of view, to justify the ways of God to man.—Notwithstanding we are endued with this intellectual faculty, there is no room for boasting on this account, since it is received, not acquired.

The magnificent display of power,—equity,—and condescension in the supreme arbiter of the universe in creating an intelligent animal, for the purpose of universal beneficence, appears superlatively excellent in the contemplation of what we *are*. But with more than resplendent lustre does infinite forbearance shine when we reflect as reasonable

sonable creatures, what we *ought* to be. If the faculties of the mind entitle us to superior honour than the brute, they no less require a more perfect obedience to the laws of eternal justice. But when is the tribute paid? Are we not idolizing self, and sacrificing on the altar of pride, though debtors for all that we possess?

In order to give a more particular definition of the nature,—properties,—and extent of Reason, shall divide it into three distinct classes:—as a faculty of the mind;—as a standard or rule of moral action;—as a cause assigned for the existence of any thing. Reason is that to the mind which the eye is to the body, it discerns intelligible objects with a precision and exactness suited to its nature. But as the eye is a tender part of the body, so also is this faculty of delicate fabric and contexture. Reason has three general assistants: thought,—memory,—and opinion; besides various other subalterns.—Thought first conceives and calls in the aid of idea;—memory retains and so forms
complex

complex ideas ;—and opinion confirms what the two preceding powers have been forming : so that by their mutual co-operation, conception is supported,—and Reason only can decide. It is the peculiar province of this faculty to act as umpire or president in the mind, and to issue its decrees in all cases that come before it. “ The word Reason, in English, says “ Mr. Locke, has different significations. “ Sometimes it is taken for true principles : sometimes for clear and fair deductions from those principles : sometimes for the cause, and particularly “ for the final cause.”

But in the present view of it, shall consider it as a faculty that distinguishes man from the irrational, and as the greatest moral ornament of humanity. Reason is that faculty of the soul which is sometimes called intellect, and is capable of anticipation and fruition.—Though at the same time it is contra-distinguished from appetite, which is of a sensual nature, and employed on sensual objects. The anticipation

cipation of Reason is founded on concurrent circumstances that establish an opinion of solid enjoyment, or a considerate attention to things that have a tendency to evil, as likely to produce them; —for we anticipate evil as well as good. —Fruition is that capacious extensive faculty that is peculiar to the mind, and which, as possessed of Reason, can be satisfied only with durable and abiding objects. The fruition here intended, is not a sordid gratification, but solid comfort resulting from a studied connection of things, that prove the permanency of the thing enjoyed. This faculty may be further considered as in some measure, the luminary of the mind, since the soul is that immaterial part of us which nature has endued with all the powers of moral guidance and direction. Now as naturally, we should be dark in our understandings, and blind in our conceptions without Reason, so by its assistance we are in some degree guided and directed.

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To determine more particularly on the *nature* of Reason, it will be necessary to enquire how, or in what manner it is actuated. It is first actuated by *opinion*, and then by *evidence*. Thus it conceives by the former, and determines by the latter. It judges as far as it can see or know,—and without demonstrable proof rarely applauds or condemns. It is perfectly consistent, morally considered, and admits of no variation. As a faculty, its powers advance, increase,—and ripen with our years, though at certain periods of life, it has failed in almost every instance. But this is generally the case, when the strength of the body exceeds that of the mind. As these are circumstantial inferences, they will admit only of a partial application. Experience is the perfection of Reason, as theory is only the beginning of it. In the use of this faculty we judge from circumstances and probability, for that which seems improbable, cannot be admitted by Reason. Hence it is evident that this faculty is contra-distinguished to faith or assent in
some

some respects, since that follows upon a clear proof to our Reason. As we judge by, so we do not admit any thing without the approbation of our Reason, so in this sense, it is similar to faith or assent to any proposition. “ Reason, says the ingenious Locke, as contra-distinguished to
 “ faith, I take to be the discovery of the
 “ certainty or probability of such propositions, or truths, which the mind arrives at by deductions made from such
 “ ideas, which it has got by the use of its
 “ natural faculties, viz. by sensation or
 “ reflection.” Plato says, “ Reason, which
 “ is the organ for judging, is either
 “ science or opinion, the principle of the
 “ one is intellection, the principle of the
 “ other is sense.” Primevally considered, it is a restraint on the passions,—a check to vice;—and an incentive to virtue:—but this faculty has been greatly debilitated,——enervated,——and enfeebled, through the apostacy of man. By this means the faculty of Reason has become a faint opposer of the turbulency of the passions, and in consequence hereof,
 without

without preternatural aid, will fall an easy prey to its numerous enemies, and though the moral pilot of humanity, is overcome by the waves of passion, and drowned in the mighty ocean of vice! Considered as a *depraved* faculty of the mind, it is incapable of instructing us of itself without superior aid and assistance; therefore in order to form a proper idea of its nature, we must deem it the agent of the mind that acts *upon* instruction. The concurrence,—sanction, and support of Reason, is so frequently invoked in the cause of error, that it becomes a most important point to know how we are to distinguish the *reality* from its *counterfeit*.

“ Reason, we say, was made to learn,
 “ not to teach, (adds an ingenious writer,) and therefore to set her up for a
 “ teacher, when she was never designed
 “ for that office, is certainly wrong.”
 Since then it is evident that it cannot instruct us, we must not seek for knowledge through that medium, but use it as a
 learned

learned author once observed, “ as an
 “ organ for the light of instruction to act
 “ upon.”

I shall proceed now to consider Reason as a *standard*, or *rule of moral action*.—Maxims,—rules,—and precepts, are usually meant to regulate the conduct by inferences and deductions drawn from them. So when Reason is considered as a standard, it implies we are to act *according* to it. But as error is to be avoided, in this case the precept should be unerring; or otherwise we are liable to err. That Reason is not infallible, and consequently not to be wholly depended on, will appear by considering that it is ideal,—variable,—partial. What we often suppose to be the path of Reason, proves frequently the steps of folly, and what we conceive agreeable to sound Reason appears to be directly opposite, and the occasion is, because ideal,—suggestion,—opinion,—probability,—circumstances,—and events, bias the uncertain pilot either
 one

one way or the other. Again, since it exists in idea what one man would pursue as right, another avoids as wrong, for we can arrive at no certain conclusion. For even right Reason, as it is termed, is the effect of experience and observation, that judges only by what it has seen and known.

Prescience is not in the power of man, and therefore his Reason as a proper standard, is insufficient. It is also variable in its decisions because there is no other standard or rule, but what a man can conceive or comprehend;—as for instance, the Deists believe nothing but what they can reduce to Reason, or rather to their senses, when at the same time the thing itself is *above* their Reason. Men will acknowledge the exploits of an Alexander or a Cæsar, however incredible, to be agreeable to Reason; when the miraculous division of the Red Sea is contradicted, and deemed irrational; not considering, that with God nothing is impossible, or too great for him to perform. The philosophers universally professed to
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form their faith and conduct by Reason only, and yet they varied greatly in their opinions. Thales affirmed the soul to be a principle endued with a power of moving itself, but Aristotle denied it. Thus this pretended standard was nothing more than their natural conceptions, and whoever depends on the mere rudiments of Reason, will, like them, be left to uncertainties and confusion: It is also partial in its nature, because self-interest will be predominant; and as it can fix no limit, but received opinions; it will be eventually swayed by the will to become subservient to its purposes, and is therefore bigotted in favour of its inclination, which consequently determines that, whatever it is, to be Reason.

Mr. Locke says, "Reason, though of a very large extent fails us in several instances." There are many propositions far above our comprehension, but are not on that account irrational. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the *use* and *abuse* of Reason, for in the proper use

of it, it is steady and consistent, but in the abuse these erroneous effects appear, all which are ridiculously attributed to this principle. Atheism, deism, and infidelity are the prostitution, and not the due exercise of Reason. If we consider it as a standard, we suppose a number of concurrent circumstances, or general examples that have usually passed for maxims, rules, and precepts, by which either our theoretic assent to any thing, or our practical conduct is applauded or condemned. This is what is called judging of things *according* to Reason. But if it fail so frequently as a faculty, it is equally liable to do so as a standard, for the former is the depraved agent, the latter a depraved system.

So that revelation is, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Deists to disprove it, the *only proper* standard of Reason, because it is pure and undefiled. The lively oracles of infallibility, are that on which alone this faculty can fitly exert itself. For it cannot be supposed that God, by
thus

thus ennobling man, designed him to question what he has revealed, or decide by his finite comprehension, what an infinitely wise Being has declared. What men in general then call agreeable to Reason, is only agreeable to their opinion, for that which is the true standard, carries its evidence with it to the heart and conscience; whereas what is reputed Reason by many is only a partial acquiescence in what others reject, or a deeming that *right*, which others call *wrong*.

We proceed in the third place to consider Reason as a cause assigned for the existence of any thing: This, Plato calls a dialectic science, whose office is to consider the essences and accidents of things. Essences, he says, are either explained by their higher generals in division and definition, or by their inferiors in analysis. In the way of ratiocination, we must first have in our view, the judgment resulting from the person judging, and the thing judged.

Aristotle divided logic into three parts, terms,—propositions,—syllogisms. Terms he says, are either *Homonymous*, (i. e.) of the same name but different essences,—or *synonymous*, of the same name and definition,—or *paronymous*, as differing only in case or termination. A philosophical proposition he calls an enunciative speech, distinct from the precatory and imperative, which belong to rhetoric and poetry. The form of syllogisms was first invented by Aristotle, they consist of three propositions, two premises, and a conclusion; as also of three terms, two extremes, and a medium. A syllogism is either demonstrative, dialectic, or sophistic; the demonstrative draws the conclusion from its true, first, immediate, and more known causes. A dialectic syllogism, concludes from probabilities. A sophistic syllogism, concludes a falsehood from truth, and that either by wresting the words or the sense. The precarious nature of human reasoning, is evident, from the various modes adopted; and the slender thread of consequences, by which they are suspended; for if one contrary circumstance

stance intervenes, our reasoning is overturned,—and our arguments destroyed. As we judge of causes by their effects, having no other alternative, and as those effects can be received only by our senses, in a way of comprehension, which portal of the mind proves often a deceiver, our Reason yields frequently to error, and confirms a *falsehood*.

In the investigation of a case proper evidence is usually required, before judgment is given. For as man is neither endowed with prescience or omniscience, he cannot determine eventually but by certain effects. And as the result of things, however apparently significant, is uncertain; we are ever at a loss to decree aright: Their appearances are so various, and often so specious, that we are deceived frequently when we suppose ourselves certain,—and judge wrong, when we imagine we are indubitably right; so precarious are the decisions of Reason.—Mr. Pomfret describes it thus,

" Reason 'tis true should over sense preside,
 " Correct our notions and our judgment guide;
 " But false opinions rooted in the mind,
 " Hood-wink the soul, and keep our Reason blind.

Arguments according to Aristotle, are gained by four instruments, a choice of propositions,—distinction of equivocals,—invention of differences,—and consideration of similitudes.—Epicurus informs us " the functions of sense are grounded
 " upon a real existence which was before
 " given in for a truth, that is, all sensations or appearances are really caused
 " by something that is in effect such as it
 " seems."—So that this branch of Reason is only proving what *maybe*, by what *is*, and judging of the future by the present.

The security against error here is indifferent, since our whole system is conjecture; and the only cause to be assigned is *probability*. Upon this slender basis do the Deists cavil with revelation, because they cannot assign a cause for the existence

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tence of truths therein revealed; when at the same time the extent of their reasoning is *idea*. This branch of Reason is usually known by the names of arguments, ratiocination and logic. The ingenious Mr. Locke informs us, "that in reasoning, men ordinarily use four sorts of arguments; the first is to alledge the opinions of men whose learning or peculiar eminency has gained them a name and reputation; this may be called *argumentum ad verecundium*. Secondly, another way is to require the adversary to admit what they alledge as a proof, or to assign a better;" this he calls "*argumentum ad ignorantium*. A third way is to press a man with consequences drawn from his own principles or concessions;" this is already known under the name of *argumentum ad hominem*. Fourthly, "the using proofs drawn from any of the foundations of knowledge or probability," this he calls "*argumentum ad iudicium*;" but the last method we find is the only one approved by that ingenious writer. It is indeed

vain to pretend to discuss any point whatever, without a knowledge of the thing itself, or a full conviction in your own mind of the probability of it. But alas! we reason more by the latter, than the former.

We know comparatively but little, and the small share of *true* Reason we possess is so blinded by sense,—and overwhelmed by passion, that affection, choice, and interest prevail, where truth only should be predominant. Ask the miser, what is the cause men are so generally impoverished and distressed,—the reason he will assign, will be—they do not exercise frugality, and follow his example;—on the other hand enquire of the modern profligate, why so many are wretched in the midst of wealth;—he will tell you because they do not *enjoy* it as *he* does. Ask a man what is truth, he will inform you what he conceives to be so, and what is not, by its evidence to his understanding; whereas, probably, were you soon after to make the same enquiry of another,

ther, something quite contrary would be the result, and yet he likewise mention its evidence to his understanding. Thus there is no general rule even in considering Reason as a cause assigned for the existence of any thing, since opinion dictates, and the causes assigned will vary according thereunto. Not that the cause of any thing varies according to opinion, but the opinion of the cause it is that varies.

Thus having briefly considered Reason under three distinct classes, now proceed to take a more general review of its origin,—properties,—and effects,—the former of which we can alone ascribe to Deity. From the inexhaustible fountain of his fulness, we receive what he is pleased to bestow; and out of his “abundant treasures” of wisdom and knowledge,” every rational faculty is supplied.

God endued man with Reason that he might be capable of worshipping, adoring, and glorifying him. Nor does the great
 Creator

Creator treat his creatures otherwise than as rational, — he deals with them in a rational way; — and requires of them “a reasonable service.” — It is contradictory to suppose that Infinite Justice will require *more* of his creatures than they are *capable* of performing. For man having lost his power *actually*, Wisdom Infinite has provided a ransom, whereby the offender may be saved and his justice satisfied. Religion is perfectly consistent to Reason, though what many call so is diametrically opposite. Since then God is the origin and source of Reason, we must receive of his fulness to enjoy it in perfection, and be supernaturally actuated to live *according* to its dictates. This genuine sapience does not consist, as what is commonly called Reason does, in mere idea, nor is it founded on probability only, but it is the work of Infallibility, — consequently the effects are permanent. If the Deists duly considered that God is the origin of this governing principle, they would not question what he has revealed, though perhaps above their Reason. — To consider further
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its properties, we find its essential duty is to curb,—check,—and restrain the passions.

Now that Reason which has no other agent than idea, has generally failed in this point, for passion has proved too powerful an adversary for an opponent already vitiated and depraved. The properties of renovated Reason, are more potent and numerous; they restrain the passions, and in a great measure subdue them. Discernment, another property is obscured,——impeded,——and eclipsed, through the direful contagion of vice; but when the veil of depraved nature is changed into the refinements of perspicuity, the moral ignorance ceases,—and a wonderful illumination of the mind ensues. Reason then distinguishes between good and evil, being taught from above, and guided by its Infinite Creator. The happy effects of the predominancy of Reason soon appear in a diligent pursuit of virtue, and a practical abhorrence of vice.—Precept now becomes influential, and Reason determines in favour of virtue.—

tue.—It does not here assume the office of instructor, but faithfully obeys instruction, and acts in subserviency to the rules of true religion and virtue, guided by its object, and happy *in, not for*, obeying. Dr. Horne says, concerning Reason, “ Without instruction it is impossible for
“ her to do any thing, because reasoning
“ or induction of inferences, necessarily
“ pre-supposes her to be furnished with
“ proper data to go upon, and these data
“ in spiritual things, are only to be
“ had from the word of God, for *the*
“ *commandments of the Lord are pure, en-*
“ *lightening the eyes,*” Psalm xix. 9. Bishop Wilkins in his treatise on natural religion, says, “ Those persons have no just
“ pretence to Reason who renounce religion.” Plutarch asserts “ it to be an
“ exceeding improper thing to ascribe
“ *true* Reason to those persons who do
“ not acknowledge and adore the Deity.” Man was undoubtedly formed for the honour of his Maker, can he be said to act rationally, any further than he answers that great end and design?

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Though endued with this happy faculty, we are a strange compound of inconsistencies, and are as much guided by our will as a ship is by its helm. Hence it is we act so *irrationally*,—and often the more we *scientifically* know, the less we know of ourselves. Reason as a depraved faculty, will not inform us in this necessary branch of knowledge; but as acting upon divine instruction, and in subserviency to the divine command it will; if God supernaturally convinces us of what we are,—our Reason confirms the truth of it.

Moral Reason instead of informing, deceives us, and instead of guiding, deserts us.—To silence every objection against the manner in which this subject has been treated, as derogating from its power and merit, and not properly enforcing its *moral* utility, it will be necessary to premise, that if humanity had retained its primeval purity and innocence, Reason would still be sufficient to guide, direct, and teach us,—but as man is fallen,—though Reason still exists, yet as depraved in consequence

quence thereof, instead of being a teacher, it must *now* be subject to *superior* teaching: For I do not mean to disclaim its proper being, but merely to put it in its *proper* place.

There are various impediments which necessarily obstruct the progress of enquiry, hence it is that those faculties which are the immediate avenues of information, prove frequently incompetent to the purposes of accurate decision. This is the grand error, men in general attend to what they suppose the voice of discernment, which leads to evil instead of good; but alas! it is their corrupt inclination, and *not* Reason that guides them.

Are not learning, sense, and understanding, prostituted by many to the vilest purposes? and yet such are professors of Reason, though by their conduct we can scarcely think them *possessors*.—The cause is obvious,—unassisted Reason having no other agent than sense or natural perception, and that being blinded by vice, which
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biasses the will and affections,—these mental confederates rebel against its lawful authority, and overpower it by numbers. The effect is, this moral governor yields to the importunate sollicitations of its inmates, and thus becomes positively,—actually,—and definitively *accessary* to evil. Not so does *true* Reason conduct itself since it is invincible because it is the work of Infinitude itself. Our natural faculties indeed teach us *more* than we are either willing to believe or obey, and hence much of what is deemed *irrational*, incurs that epithet only because it is *unpleasing*.

Having fully proved the insufficiency of that Reason which is founded only on probability and opinion, for the purposes of guidance and direction, and shewn from the general failure of this moral Reason in influencing the conduct and regulating the passions, the absolute necessity of superior Reason to effect such important purposes,—it appears folly in the extreme in Deists and others, to abide by the decisions

sions of that which is not capable of giving due information.

Reason, under preternatural influences is an antidote against error,—and the bulwark of truth. For herein a perfect harmony subsists, the will and affections being happily enlisted into its service. Every faculty of the mind unites in one common cause, and one general interest. Nor is *this* refined degree of Reason yet arrived to its meridian,—its zenith is reserved until the natural dissolution of the body, —when the immortal faculty shall be rendered perfect, and capable of enjoying its Maker in the realms of everlasting bliss and glory. Then hope shall be swallowed up in vision,——and joy in fruition.—— When neither vice shall assail us by temptation,—nor disquietude invade our comforts; then Reason shall be employed in contemplating the wonders of grace, and the riches of glory. All the barriers of sense and opinion shall vanish, reality alone appear—and gratitude, praise, and adoration, be the eternal tribute of *our glorified* Reason.

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By the aid of ontology it is unquestionably true, that the most accurate discoveries have been made with a degree of coherency and precision peculiar to that science;—on the other hand metaphysical subtilities have too often proved the subterfuge of error,—and the means of general deception. But it must be observed, we have in no instance so compleat a view of what Reason *can* do, as in the intricate and impervious paths of abstruse metaphysical abstraction.—There we behold *entity* traced through innumerable intervening difficulties,—amidst a confused heap of extraneous ideas, till at length explored, and problematically proved.

Yet, notwithstanding these extensive acquisitions and science, we view on the other hand, the visionary charms of an hypothesis dazzling perception with a transient glimmer, and the very objects* we are daily conversant with, in their nature to us, are ambiguous and unintelligible.—Hence by considering our Reason

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* Space and substance.

son as the criterion of rectitude, or the infallible standard of truth,—we defeat its natural exertions,—and after the most logical arrangements, this conclusion will prove itself just,—that Reason is what facts testify,—experience cannot contradict,—and virtue authorizes.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVI.

O N

C U S T O M.



O N
C U S T O M.

E S S A Y XXVI.

“ Custom, the world’s great idol we adore,
“ And knowing this, we seek to know no more ;
“ What education did at first receive,
“ Our ripen’d age confirms us to believe.
“ The careful nurse, and priest is all we need,
“ To learn opinions and our country’s creed ;
“ The parent’s precepts early are instill’d,
“ And spoil the man, while they instruct the child ”

POMFRET.

THERE is scarcely an absurdity extant,—an enormity practised,—or a folly exhibited, that cannot in some degree or other, plead the sanction of Custom. From the regions of elegance and splendour, to the confines of plebeianism itself, Custom is the only standard, and the general rule of conduct. In every station of life,—in every age,—rank,—and degree, Custom is implicitly obeyed,

and universally honoured.—Common sense stands in no competition;—and though Custom should dictate a comparative madness, even reason must yield to its demands. The air of our imagination has long been infected, and the contagion diffused itself far. We need never despair of succeeding, if Custom is on our side, let the thing be ever so ridiculous in itself, or destructive in its consequences; if it has but this sanction, nothing is to be dreaded from the world, however absurd, inconsistent,—preposterous,—or vain.

We seldom enquire into the merit of any thing, but our first question is, *is it customary*, if answered in the affirmative, our acquiescence immediately ensues. The votaries of the *ton* would not deviate from a rule so universal, though their peace was destroyed, and their happiness infringed on. It is co-existent with life in one point of view, since it is no longer called *living*, than while we act according to Custom. It seems to be the law of nature, since what is acquired from the cradle,

cradle, increases in youth,—displays itself in manhood,—and becomes *natural* with age. The wise philosopher tells us, that the soul of man is *rasa tabula*, like a white sheet of paper, out of which it must be more than common art to erase the first impressions.

Every nation, people, and country, have their peculiar Customs, which appear strange to us, merely because they are not familiar, for use makes all things common. As nothing can appear more absurd, not to say worse, than the manners of some countries, which Custom has given a sanction to, and which history furnishes us with an account of, shall recite a few of them, to prove that nothing is counted ridiculous that is common. For instance, —to esteem it a most pious and religious act, to kill their parents, when they come to such an age, and then to eat them,—where chastity in unmarried women is held in no estimation ;—where they have no marriages, and children only own their mothers ;—where the ordinary way of salutation

lutation is by putting a finger down to the earth, and then pointing it up to heaven;—and where whenever the king spits, the greatest ladies of his court put out their hands to receive it.—Hence we see there is nothing too ridiculous to be practiced, or too absurd to be admitted, if precedents can be found to establish, or use to confirm it. We need not indeed go far for instances to prove this assertion, since we have proofs in abundance within our own observation.

Every society and order both of men and women, are governed by Custom, the courtier would not vary from the chamberlain's edict,—nor the temporizing charmer lose one plume of fashion, if an opera was to consist of *feathered* fowl; or the plodding cit wear a hat bigger than Custom dictated, though his face was like the full moon, and his body the seeming receptacle of unwearied gluttony. There needs no other sanction than Custom to make the most preposterous figures in the rational creation, or to pervert even nature

ture itself by the most unnatural follies. The metropolis hourly furnishes us with a sight of these painted idols of fancy, who soar upon the wings of Custom to the regions of extravagance and dissipation.—Custom can make men delicate, and women hardy,—occasion the former to faint at pleasure,—or excite in the latter amazonian fortitude. In short, there is nothing too ridiculous to be avoided, or too scandalous to be rejected. Custom removes every obstacle and reconciles all differences.

Almost every man is fearful of being singular, and the dreaded stigma of an *oddity* is cautiously avoided. When we consider that every man of sense and common understanding is capable of judging for himself, it appears strange that man should be altogether biassed by others, and be the mere dupes of another man's invention; for such every implicit follower of Custom is. So great is the attention paid to this rule of behaviour, that if the conduct of any one, however cruel or unjust, can be proved to have a precedent

precedent it will be justified, solely on that account. But on the other hand, if purposes however laudable in themselves are unprecedented,—they are either condemned to oblivion, or censured in the execution.

Will any man pretend to say that men act as *free agents*, when they are the vassals of custom? Or can any one say, a man acts from principle who acts traditionally? We may rest assured that the man who is the mere tool of Custom in every branch of department, has either no principle of his own,—or no inclination to shew it. There may be a partial necessity for obeying Custom in trivial circumstances, but an *universal* necessity, I believe, can seldom be pleaded.—Common law is generally preferred before statute law, and that is chiefly founded on Custom. In these respects a necessity may be urged, since civil and social concerns often can be adjusted only by social precedents, or what has passed for *right* among men. Custom undoubtedly has its
uses

uses and benefits, as well as evil consequences, the former of which primarily includes subordination to civil authority,—discipline,—regularity,—and order. By Custom these benefits are sometimes preserved. In various respects form is absolutely requisite, and produces awe from inferiors, adding lustre and dignity to exalted characters.

But the most alarming effects resulting from Custom are, when form is substituted in the place of privilege,—profession in the stead of possession,—and the whole productive of mere customary obedience. These evils are peculiarly prevalent in matters of religion.—There are many who can give no other reason for their religion, than their being *brought up to it*, and whose religion is no more than Custom. These pursue one round of duties, merely, to appear orderly and decent,—and could with equal regard be either a Protestant,—Papist,—Turk,—or an Infidel, if their parents had so educated them. Can such persons be said to act rationally? For the

the generous dictates of virtue, and the refined powers of religion are out of the question, they cannot possibly have *any* influence on such. A Mahometan from principle appears less despicable than a Protestant, from Custom. Let every man think for himself, and not be swayed by another in a matter of such importance. Erasmus calls Custom the monosyllable tyrant, because it is formed *mos*, in Latin, though Pinder styles her the queen and empress of the world. Sir Thomas Pope Blount says, “ the best account many “ give of their faith is, that they were bred “ in it, and the most are driven to their “ religion by Custom and education.”

Were we concerned to investigate every subject before we positively determine, our judgment would be informed, and our minds enlightened, but Custom prejudices the mind in favour of its imbibed notions, and refuses to listen to the voice of truth. It is a difficult task to eradicate the prejudices of education; every man is partial to his own opinion, and consequently de-
barred

barred that information which impartiality would admit; did we rather study the merits than the estimation of things, Custom would not so powerfully sway us. From the general subversion of nature, eventually consequent on Custom, it has been deemed *another* or *second* nature, to denote the powerful effects and influence of it.

Custom, as well as opinion is liable to mutation,—dissolution,—and extinction, no man can insure the continual adoption of any Custom longer than pursued, an argument this, that proves the absurdity of being guided by it. The great force of example is a truth universally acknowledged,—and Custom is chiefly founded on the practice of others. Habits are soon acquired, but not easily quitted; at best we are but mimicks, and novelty, as the wise man says, is not under the sun. Such have been the effects of imitation, that when deformity was invested with royalty, some centuries past, the courtiers perverted even the ornaments and just proportion

proportion of nature, to the servile purposes of Custom; every courtier became artificially, as his monarch was naturally, deformed.—The Briton, whose characteristic is a manly roughness,—magnanimity,—and fortitude, is, by a change of climate, transformed into mere effeminacy. The honest tradesman, whose dialect is plain and easy,—by one single trip to Paris, becomes the lisper of affected elegance, and a votary to dress. In short, we may be well compared to wax, capable of any impression. Having hitherto in general, represented Custom in a ridiculous point of view, by a brief recital of some of its effects, shall further consider it, as it stands connected with our nobler faculties of reasoning, and from these premises endeavour to prove the vanity, of implicitly yielding to its dictates.

To consider man in any other view than as rational, would be indeed derogatory and false. It never can be supposed then, that discernment was given him for purposes of abject servility, since the judgment

ment is capable of deciding, and the will and affections of approving. Choice is the great privilege of a reasonable creature, and the power of making use of it, is an additional blessing; to have no choice argues brutal stupidity,—and to act contrary to it, where there is no compulsion, evidences degeneracy extreme. If then we enjoy such privileges, the abuse of them aggravates our guilt. For when the purity of our intentions is undoubted,—and the rectitude of our conduct indisputable, a blind acquiescence in the injunctions of Custom, in opposition to the dictates of conscience, is neglecting a steady perseverance,—defeating the end of discernment,—and violating the most sacred requirements. What is man the better for knowing, if he acts contrary to knowledge? And thus many do in adhering to Custom.—Further, if such a conduct is not the effect of inattention, it is the consequence of peculiar weakness, it proves the man to be callous to the admonitions of conscience,—the voice of truth,—or the common dictates of reason. It is sacrificing
every

every thing to the shrine of Custom, and a positive deification of it. "The continually being accustomed to any thing," says Montaigne, blinds the eye of our judgment." And as the Greeks and Romans formerly called *all barbarians* who followed not their laws and fashions, so we also account every deviation from the rules of Custom, a species of barbarism, if not barbarity itself. Devoted in almost every act and instance, we seem superstitious worshippers of this idol Custom.

An evil it is said, is half removed when we discover the cause; and one grand source of this folly appears to be—acting by opinion, and not from conviction. No man would be thus duped, were it not that he feared incurring the censure of others. Therefore until we can live above, and regardless of opinion, we shall never throw off the fetters of Custom.—Another cause is, truth being weighed by the balance of estimation, and not of merit. Interest has too often dictated error, when
conscience

conscience has witnessed for truth. Does it not then behove every one of us to attend to the *motives* of our conduct, and consider by what we are usually influenced.

The ravages which Custom has made amongst the discerning part of mankind, would be matter of the utmost astonishment, did not facts corroborate my assertion, that we live and act by opinion. Let us ever remember, that if we can assign no better reason for our conduct than Custom, it is no solid plea in the least. But however biassed by party, in civil or relative concerns, to be the blind followers of Custom, yet let us never prostitute religion or virtue to this temporal criterion of merit. And let every generous and aspiring mind consider, that of all slaveries, that is the worst, when the mind as well as the body is fettered. Freedom is like the refreshing dew to the thirsty earth, that promotes vegetation and increase,—but Custom is like the fatal blast, that destroys the bud of hope and expectation. Finally

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let us not yield to any thing but what carries its evidence with it, or implicitly submit to Custom where the judgment does not wholly approve.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVII.

O N

ESTIMATION

A N D

REPUTATION.



ON
ESTIMATION
AND
REPUTATION.

ESSAY XXVII.

“ Invidiam placare paras virtute relicta ?”

HORACE, *Sat. III. Lib. ii. v. 13.*

“ Lætus sum laudari à te laudato viro.”

TULLY.

HAD prejudice with vehemence extreme, or passion with unabating ardour, ever yielded its belligerent weapons to the more calm dictates of reason, the mind would have been open to conviction, in every act and instance. But enslaved by these tyrants of the will,—the gentle voice of candour is unheard,—and truth in the hallowed garb of intrinsic purity gains *no* admission. A vassalage so uni-

versal, insures submission, abject to a degree;—and even judgment resigns its sceptre to the imperious mandates of Estimation and Reputation.—We are all naturally desirous of esteem; few indeed bear even with reproof,—and fewer still can patiently submit to censure. Most think they have some claim on the approbation of others, whether obtained or not. The candidates for Estimation are so numerous, that we find competitors in almost every undertaking;—and the success is so greatly disproportioned, that the efforts of a considerable majority prove abortive.—Merit is too little regarded, and the most undeserving frequently succeed.

A name once acquired, we may sail down the current of opinion with the greatest rapidity imaginable,—claim unparalleled excellency in the thing esteemed;—and waft the credulous over the whole surface of aerial fancy.—So powerful are the effects of Estimation, that even prejudices have been overcome by this conftraining

straining rule, for experience declares, the sole reason frequently to be assigned for the adoption of measures, is their general acceptation. Nor is it limited to circumstances alone, but extends itself to principles universally decisive. Right and wrong is too often weighed by the balance of Estimation, and admitted by its partial decisions. This, like custom, is a sanction almost to any thing, and few things are practiced without its being previously consulted.

If stoical apathy can on any ground be commended, it is here. Or if the professional free-thinkers of the age, can in any wise be sentimentally acceded to, in this respect probably they may.—For as they profess to disregard opinion, in its most alluring dress,—and to reject its authority under any pretences, they act much more consistent with reason, than those who are altogether led by it. Many of our anxieties result hence, for by measuring our conduct by this rule,—and confining our bliss to its prescriptions,—

we become vassals where we should be free,—and deny ourselves that liberty which the author of universal nature has granted to us : even—the natural and undoubted right of thinking for ourselves.—In order to prove the error of judging by Estimation, concerning the merits or demerits of any thing, it will be necessary to enquire into the origin and extent of this rule of conduct.

Estimation generally admits of two definitions, 1. a received opinion, that has gained common assent, 2. an act of the will, that determines either for or against any thing proposed.—It has been judiciously observed, that sense, consciousness, and reason, are the common mediums of science, hence it is, that whatever meets not with the entire concurrence of one or all of these, cannot properly be deemed any thing more than an act of the will, without the assent of the judgment.—For it is possible we may esteem some things, we are not competent judges of, and which our ignorance only occasions

us to esteem. This is an impulse of passion. But with regard to Estimation as including general assent to any proposition, which from its approved merit passes for a maxim or proverbial saying; this is chiefly founded on prior circumstances that have proved its validity, and have been the means of rendering it generally accepted. To recommend any deviation from these, may be thought too great an acquiescence in self, without paying a proper deference to the opinion of others. As to this, although we may acknowledge all the merit of such propositions, yet we undoubtedly act wrong in being guided by any general notions, unless we are *conscious* of their propriety. For it is paying too great a compliment to human traditions to sacrifice conscience by implicitly believing them. Let it be observed, I mean not to urge such a conduct respecting divine revelation,—for the oracles of truth, as infallible, have a positive claim on our assent,—whereas the general opinions of men have no further, than as they appear evident to the understanding.

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To strengthen my argument, let us consider what received opinions are frequently the result of?—Too seldom of mature deliberation, and cautious examination. On the contrary, we find often one man imbibes an opinion—he communicates it to a second who assents to it,—to a third who confirms it,—to a fourth who abides by it,—and thus it becomes *general*; when probably a third of its professors are *unacquainted* with its nature and tendencies. In this manner the greatest absurdities have been transmitted from one generation to another,—and by dint of Estimation have been deemed *unquestionable*.—So far from considering a dissenting from any thing generally assented to, as dogmatical; should be inclined to suppose that person if he acted from principle, an impartial enquirer, though we might far differ in sentiment. The man whose determinations are the result of critical enquiry, is far more to be attended to, than one who assents to any thing because it is held in common Estimation. The former is an honour to the cause he espouses,

espouses,—the latter a disgrace to any. No acquiescence in the opinion of another can possibly yield the satisfaction, or be productive of the comfort that must arise from the *consciousness* of the truth of it. As for instance, if a fatalist were to adopt every argument to enforce the doctrine of fatality, in order to convince men of the truth of it, nothing would so powerfully sway the mind as a conviction of its expediency, or afford equal consolation as if its happy tendencies were rendered self-evident. The man who thinks and acts according to the dictates of his own conscience is happier, by far, than him who is the slave of received opinions.

It is perverting the very order of things to suppose that one man can be a judge for another : for what one would esteem to be pleasure,—another would consider as pain ;—what one would esteem to be happiness, another would consider as misery ;—what one would esteem an honour, another would consider disgrace,—and what one would esteem to be *right*,—another

ther would consider as *wrong*. — Having briefly shewn the simplicity of yielding to whatever is held in Estimation, as a total subversion of sense,—reason,—and consciousness, or rather, a baneful disregard of them. I proceed now to consider Estimation as an act of the will.—A voluntary Approbation when it is not connected with, or the effect of judgment, necessarily supposes an apprehension of good in the thing chosen, but not originating from a positive conclusion or inference from a prior cause. But Estimation when the result of a determination in the judgment, is more permanent and abiding, and is actuated by conviction.

Estimation of this kind, reflects some degree of honour on the person who thus esteems as contra-distinguished to the airy flights of *fancy*, or the momentary impulses of passion. Temerity is studiously avoided, —and prudence carefully observed.—Thus it is I mean to distinguish between being led by the Estimation of *others*, and approving from conscience
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and the determination of the judgment.—The former as the cause of a multiplicity of evils,—the grossest absurdities,—and the most accumulated grievances,—deserves to be exploded as a principle of conduct, and to be rejected as the patron of folly.—The latter displays motives the most generous and sublime, and is worthy the imitation of all,—and the observance of any.

Reputation is generally considered as the most important of all temporal concerns, and an invaluable privilege, and a name will effect more than any just pretensions to merit. For as the world abounds with deceivers, every one supposes a general recommendation to be immediately necessary. Hence it is most are so tenacious of their characters, deeming it essential to their well being in life.—The laws of countries and societies, and the great law of nature, have united for its general preservation, and the punishment of every trespass on these sacred borders.—But notwithstanding such are
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the precautions used for its support, and the means adopted for its defence ;—yet there are a species of devouring mortals, that are continually offering the most violent insults.—A certain humourous philosopher, Diogenes, called them “ Wild Beasts,” an appellative by no means inapplicable. Detraction is in fact become so prevailing an evil, that there seems almost as much need to beware of it, as of any morbid contagion. These common *murderers* have diffused their malignant evils with impunity ;—vented their spleen without remorse,—and ruined without reward.

Reputation, though almost valuable as our lives, can seldom escape the venom of these poisonous adders in society. Impelled either by indolence, malice, or revenge, their sportive moments are employed in one continual round of curious enquiry into every one but *themselves*.—But with canine voraciousness insatiable as desire, their envious thoughts survey the admired excellencies of one, or the peculiar

liar charms of another, and wantonly depreciate them both with zeal, diabolical and base.—Not contented with a progress so great, the aid of falsehood is frequently invoked to perpetrate the horrid purpose of defaming others.

Intelligence of this kind is joyfully received, and the wrinkled haggard of three-score years and ten,—or the modish comfort of temporal mediocrity enjoying the flavour of the oriental herb would consider every dish as affording an additional delight, in being sweetened with the admired sugar of detraction. An intended marriage—a bad husband—an approaching failure—a supposed pregnancy—conjugal variances—absurd appearances—a strange expression—a sly look—or an unfortunate blush—will afford abundant matter for discussion to these sons and daughters of insignificance.—The Reputation of almost every neighbour and acquaintance is tried by these detracting juries, and the verdict definitively given by the majority. The most immaculate Reputation

putation can rarely withstand their efforts to traduce and vilify. A qualification in one respect is counterbalanced by a proportioned failing, and thus they leave no room for escape to any one.

Thus Reputation, though an absolute condition of esteem,—credit,—confidence,—or regard, and every social benefit, lies ever at the mercy of these miscreants, who wound others in the dark. Since then, notwithstanding all our care to preserve our Reputation to the utmost, it is thus liable to the envenomed arrows of detraction, and since a great deal of our misery in this life arises from our fears and apprehensions on this head, it may not be amiss to enquire into the nature of Estimation in general, and from what shall be discovered from thence, to recommend a conduct that shall confute the malignity of our enemies, and be the means of dispelling our apprehensions, and of producing more peace and satisfaction in our minds. Estimation having been previously investigated under two classes,

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my present enquiry will extend, solely, to the common Estimation of good and evil. We are to observe there are three things which in general excite the esteem of most, — their own interest; — their own opinion; — and their own intentions. — Many things are called *good*, by persons who see their own *interest* in considering them so. — They are good so far as they answer their purpose. Most men define good or ill, by its correspondency, or otherwise, to their own interest. Men of riches, power, and influence, are esteemed often by others, merely because it is their interest to esteem them. This mistaken guide called interest, is the *only* rule of Estimation to many; we are sure then it will differ as their respective interests vary. — Again, numbers esteem almost every thing good, that agrees with their own opinion, and determine every thing bad, that disagrees with it. In short, it is the only way of judging that the greatest part of people have recourse to, for they have possibly either no capacity, or no inclination, to enquire into the

merits of any thing, but almost every one can pass his opinion.

Estimation is almost totally ideal, and more the result of conception than conviction.—Further, many persons esteem any thing excellent, as it answers or corresponds with their intentions, which in fact, is making it more a convenience than any thing else.—Having taken a brief and cursory view of the grand constituents of Estimation, it appears that by attending to this, we may be perpetually wretched; for to please *every* one has been proved impossible, it is therefore *folly* to attempt it.—This doctrine, so far from opening a door to licentiousness, will be rather an antidote against it. For in whatever we undertake,—in all that we say and do, if we act according to the dictates of our own conscience, and that unerring rule of divine revelation,—we shall be no scandal to the profession, but our practice will recommend it to others,

By

By attending to the rules of Estimation we are liable to be wrong, when we suppose ourselves right,—and to be condemned in our own conscience when others approve. But how great the satisfaction of that man, who while a censorious world may brand him with infamy and shame, has the happy testimony of a good conscience,—and acquitted by that monitor whom no one can bribe.

To pass through life with honour, is natural to be desired,—but if this is *all* we are seeking, our reward is of men, and a poor reward it is.—Estimation and Reputation are too often rendered subservient to a dangerous conformity to the world, for in the desire of securing these, we are apt to yield to the voice of temptation. But what will it avail us to be approved of men, and hereafter rejected by an Omniscent Being?—This consideration, were it to have its due weight and influence on our minds, would teach us, that even *temporal* felicity, is by no means inseparably connected with gaining the es-

teem of others.—For Estimation, when obtained, is merely the *supposition* of another, who cannot possibly discern the latent intentions of the heart.—We are also to remember that the man who studies *only* to please, is likely also to be studying to *deceive*;—but the man who *disregards* Estimation, cannot possibly lie under that censure.—Beneficence, or a desire of communicating good to others, is to be distinguished from a view of being esteemed by others.—The former is a motive generous and noble,—the latter too frequently base and sordid.

To render the chequered scenes of life, less poignant and severe,—a general disregard of opinion,—an unconcernedness to secure Estimation and Reputation, would in a great degree tend,—nor would any probable means more generally felicitate our lives, than an absolute conformity to *nothing*,—but the positive commands of heaven,—and the common dictates of conscience. 14 NO 63

ESSAY XXVIII.

O N

PROVIDENCE.



O N
P R O V I D E N C E.

E S S A Y XXVIII.

“ Heav’n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
“ All but the page, prescrib’d their present state;
“ From brutes what men, from men what spirits know,
“ Or who could suffer being here below ?”

P O P E.

THAT there is a cause which supports, upholds, and governs all things,—that superintends the minutest concerns of life, and regulates all things by an irresistible and sovereign decree,—that pervades the whole moral and natural system,—that is circumscribed by no limitation, and independent on every contingent, or extraneous cause ;—invariable, insuperable,—and infinite: is evident even to common observation. Subject to no possible controul,—sole arbiter of the uni-

verse,—antecedent to *all* things,—subsequent to none;—the cause of all causes,—and origin itself, is generally comprised in the term—Providence.—Had vivid fancy fled to its remotest borders in quest of language, or vain conception in pursuit of words; none could have been found more vague and simple than what is called Chance. It neither includes the common course of nature, or any *secondary cause, but amounts simply to this: that *something* is produced by *nothing*. That any rational creature could adopt such absolute incoherency seems almost incredible, did not daily experience prove it. To deny a Providence is to deny the being of a God, or to reduce him to the level of a finite creature.

“ The Epicureans, or followers of Epicurus, an Athenian philosopher, will either admit of no Providence at all, or at least only in such particular things as best suit their fancy. The Stoics, or followers

* Philosophically speaking, a *second cause* is absurd, —but custom has rendered the phrase allowable.

of

of Zeno, another Athenian philosopher, have instead of Providence, devised an absolute necessity of all things to be in the very nature of the things themselves, unto which they say, not only all things, but even God himself is subject, which necessity they call Destiny.—The Peripatetics, or followers of Aristotle, own that God sees and understands all things, but does not govern, order, and rule them, and that the event depends wholly on the will of man; that is, they will have the Providence of God to be a prescience or foreknowledge of things to come, but not a power or will, guiding and governing, and disposing those things.”——The sentiment of the Epicureans is little else than making a convenience of Providence, which is too apparently ridiculous to need any refutation.—The Stoics, in the other extreme, undeify the Deity, for a dependent God is a contradiction in terms.—Thales, the first of the twelve heathen sages, defines the term ascriptive to Deity, as that which hath neither beginning nor ending; consequently, absolutely and essentially

fentially independent. The Stoical notion therefore stands self-condemned. Aristotle's system is indeed more generally approved, but unhappily for its professors, it is scarcely consistent with itself.—The same power that created, can uphold, and the same power that upholds, can govern.

Now, if God sees and knows all things, and yet does not order and rule them, it argues inattention or inability, either of which is horrid to suppose. For instance, if the event of things in any respect depends on man's will, why does he not will or make, for here they are synonymous, himself happy, since that is what all men are willing to be; though they may err in the true means of attaining it? If the event of things depends on man's will, uncertainty must be the result, because the will of man is ever subject to change.—Joseph's brethren willed the ruin of their brother—the event proved his and their deliverance from a dreadful famine.—Pharaoh willed the utter extirpation of the children

children of Israel—the event was their becoming a great and mighty nation. The Persian monarch willed, or indeed, decreed the death of Daniel—the event was his miraculous preservation. Herein it appears that our will, so far from disposing events, is often frustrated and rendered abortive. To suppose that man's will can in any respect determine the event of things, is to suppose it infinite; since nothing less than Infinitude itself can accomplish that end. Another consequence follows from this chimerical notion, namely, that in order to guide and govern all things man must necessarily be omnipotent.—We frequently will and determine things in our own mind, which the event proves we are not capable of executing; if so, what becomes of Aristotle and his Followers notion of an inherent power of guiding, governing, and disposing those things?—This notion, in effect, renders the Deity no more than a mere spectator, that leaves the event of things to his creatures, and is himself at an uncertainty about them; for though they

they acknowledge a prescience in the Deity, yet events as depending on a mutable will, are uncertain, which renders it still more contradictory, that God should know all things, and yet leave the event to his creatures whose wills vary as often as the winds. To know all things, and yet be uncertain about them, are such opposites as no man can reconcile, but what are evidently contained in this notion, and as such, justify me in considering them altogether irrational. “ Fate, says Apuleius, according to Plato, is that, where-
 “ by the purposes and designs of God are
 “ accomplished.” According to the literal import of fate, we may infer an eventual necessity in things decreed that must invariably come to pass, which utterly destroys the human will as governing events, since a necessity in the thing itself excludes in man, either a power of promoting or impeding.—Thus Seneca says, speaking of God “ Will you call him
 “ Fate? You will call him rightly: for
 “ all things are suspended on him. Him-
 “ self is *causa causarum*, the cause of all
 causes

“ causes beside.”——Cicero says, “ All
 “ things come to pass according to the
 “ sovereignty of the eternal law.” Homer
 begins his Iliad with asserting “ The coun-
 “ sel or decree of Jupiter was fulfilled.”
 Trismegistus says, “ All things are brought
 “ about by Nature and by Fate, neither is
 “ any place void of Providence.” St.
 Austin says, “ But for those philosophers
 “ (alluding to the Stoics) who by the
 “ word Fate, mean that regular chain and
 “ series of causes to which all things that
 “ come to pass owe their immediate ex-
 “ istence : we will not earnestly contend
 “ with these persons about a mere term :
 “ and we the rather acquiesce in their
 “ manner of expression, because they
 “ carefully ascribe this first succession of
 “ things, this mutual concatenation of
 “ causes and effects to the will of the
 “ supreme God.”

That there is a Providence, is no less evi-
 dent in itself, than it is generally acknow-
 ledged even by heathens themselves, to the
 disgrace of those professors of christianity,
 who

who virtually deny it. A positive denial is what few indeed have effrontery enough to arrive at, since their own existence would confute them, but a mere partial acknowledgment is too common among us, by admitting a Providence in temporal, and denying it in eternal concerns.—As we are to suppose Providence the act or will, rather than the immediate being of God, that being previously supposed, the argument will be further strengthened by considering the attributes of God, and the works of God.—1. he is omnipotent, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, nor can any created being frustrate his designs, or overthrow his purpose; all things are subject to his sovereign controul, both in heaven above and in earth beneath; he is before all things, and to all things, and above all things, an almighty Being.—2. he is omniscient, and fore-knew, from eternity, what should be done in time, nor can any event come to pass without his knowledge; he searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins, and fathoms the inmost recesses of
the

the mind. He knoweth all our infirmities and our necessities before we ask. He is acquainted with all our desires and intentions, the motives of every action of our lives, and even our thoughts before they enter our minds, nor is any thing hid from his eyes. 3. He is omnipresent, and filleth all space, nor can he be bounded by any. Impressed with a sense of this, David thus expressed himself, "*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or, whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there; If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*"

As many of our wants exceed every human effort, an omnipotent Providence is suited to our several necessities. As various afflictions are known only by the persons afflicted, an omniscient Providence is also suited to our exigence in this respect. And as all men are in this mortal
life,

life, subject to frequent vicissitudes and changes, not only partially, but universally, an omnipresent Providence is also peculiarly adapted to our diversified circumstances and situations. God is also immutable in his purposes and decrees, but there is no unchangeable cause, but the will of God, consequently all things, past, present, and to come, depend on his sovereign will and pleasure, or upon his Providence. Were there any change in God, our hope would be uncertain, whereas, since there is none, it is altogether sure. Bishop Beveridge says, "As God created
 " all things by the power of his word, so
 " he preserves and governs all things by
 " the power of the same word."—There is further happiness arising from the consideration of God's unchangeableness and sovereignty when we observe that these are connected with infinite justice. The will of man is often unjust, cruel, and severe, and did events depend on his will, the effects would be no less oppressive.

God

God deals with his creatures in a way perfectly consistent with his justice, in every dispensation of Providence. Infinite mercy is also connected with the will of God. Had Deity dealt with man as he deserved, there had been no mercy, but though justice shines conspicuous, his beneficence is no way eclipsed. Mercy appears in innumerable instances in the course of Providence, in preservation from dangers——support in difficulties; and every comfort of life. These all flow from the immutable decree and will of God, inseparably connected with justice and mercy.—Infinite wisdom is also indissolubly united with absolute sovereignty. All things that are done are according to the permissive decree of Infinite Wisdom. God often permits, not creates, evil for wise ends, and over-rules it for good.—

“ The ambition of Vespasian and Titus,
 “ says Mr. Charnocke, was only to reduce
 “ Judea to the Roman province after the
 “ revolt of it: but God orders hereby the
 “ execution of his righteous will in the pu-
 “ nishment of the Jews for their rejecting

“ Christ and the accomplishment of
 “ Christ’s prediction, Luke xix. 43. For
 “ the days shall come, that thy enemies
 “ shall cast a trench about thee.”—Herein
 was a display of infinite wisdom connected
 with the immutable will and decree of
 God.—God is also the disposer of the
 means tending to every appointed end.
 Man’s will instrumentally, is the means,
 when God’s will is the appointment, the
 former is a changeable cause, but de-
 pends on an unchangeable one.—The
 works of God are also peculiarly mani-
 festative of divine Providence.—1. in crea-
 tion. From the confused chaos to the fa-
 cred paradise, infinite power and domi-
 nion reign, the canopy of heaven above,
 the verdured plain beneath, and the nu-
 merous train of reptiles, birds, fishes, and
 fourfooted beast that by instinct, which no
 reason can define, are subordinate to man,
 incontrovertibly testify an over-ruling
 Providence. But far surpassing thought
 is that mystery of wisdom, condescension
 and grace in the creation of man after the
 divine image and likeness.

As

As all things shall ultimately tend to God's glory, so did he constitute man essentially and universally dependent on himself—in 1st. His reason.—There is nothing of which vain man boasts more than his rational faculties, and yet nothing more precarious in its duration or exertions. Reason, though determinative in itself, is subject to a mutable will, which was even apparent in its primeval state. But since man's apostacy, reason is further controuled by depraved passions, so that were it not for Providence, or a governing power, it would prove our ruin.—Man's reason will direct him often to this or the other, when God's Providence prevents it, and thereby rescues him from evil. 2. Human knowledge is also subordinate to Providence, inasmuch as ideas in general are either imbibed or infused, which are the source of knowledge. The same power that creates the faculty, ordains the means, even ideas, of perceiving or knowing, without which it would be unattainable. This is evident by two persons that shall hear one thing,

one as often as the other, when one shall be well acquainted with the nature of it, and the other shall know little or nothing of the matter, and yet enjoy an equal outward opportunity of knowing.—Hence our knowledge is absolutely dependent on Providence. All the reason and knowledge which man possesses is derived, not inherent, and as God is the source and origin of it, his Providence disposes and governs it. Divine Providence is not only exemplified in man intellectually, but corporeally also.—If we consider our own existence, the manner in which we exist, and the numberless events we are hourly liable to, the many dangers to which we are exposed, whether known or unknown by us, both in going out and coming in, and in every affair and circumstance of life, it will serve to convince us of a superintending Providence. The frame of man is the most curious contexture, and extensive as the discoveries of anatomy may have been, the structure of the stomach is still unknown. If so, how necessarily dependent on Providence

vidence for its government and the due exercise of its respective functions.—We are never sure of life either as to the thing itself, or what external secondary causes may bring it to an issue. The very air we breath might prove the means of our dissolution, and things generally conducive to health be subservient to other purposes.—Our dependence is so evident in this respect, as indeed in all others, that we can scarcely suppose any one capable of denying it in his judgment, whatever he may do in his practice.—The prediction of things to come, and the accomplishment of the same, is likewise declarative of Providence.—The utter destruction of the Jewish nation was foretold many years before it came to pass, even when they were exalted above all the nations of the earth, and probability seemed to militate against it; but this was literally and exactly fulfilled,—consequently, the result of divine Providence. The variety of gifts and talents among men argues a supreme disposal of all things.—An Alexander, a Pompey, and a Cesar,

were distinguished for their heroism and intrepidity. A Cicero and a Demosthenes, for their eloquence. Distinct talents indiscriminately conferred, imply a disposing power, which is no other than Providence.

The order and preservation of commonwealths, is another argument to prove the present purpose. During the conspiracy of Catiline, the Roman empire was on the eve of ruin and a total overthrow, but by the interposition of Providence, was preserved from those impending dangers. Every nation and country in the world have been in some respect or other frequently supported in the most imminent danger, nor is it less so individually, than it is nationally. We are too apt to ascribe that to our courage or prudence, which is alone due unto Providence; hence we see God frequently reduces a nation, and individuals, so low as to surpass every human effort, in order thereby to display his power and greatness, and secure the glory which is justly due

due to his Providence. God, is the God of battles “ the race is not to the swift, “ nor the battle to the strong.” Courage and discipline are only means connected with the end, which Providence alone determines. God’s decree is in all things, irrevocable and irreverfible.—Bifhop Ufher fays, “ He that denies that God by “ his Providence, governs, orders, and “ over-rules all events, deftroys the foundation of the christian religion, oppofes “ the church, contradicts the holy Scriptures, and leffens the almighty power “ of God.” Mr. Charnocke fays, “ ’Tis “ God’s right to govern the world, and “ difpofe of his creatures, ’tis his glory “ in heaven to do what he will.” The fame judicious writer obferves, “ ’Tis the “ wifeft fpeech in the Medley of Foole- “ ries, the Turkish *Koran*. We muft “ walk by the rule of reafon which God “ hath placed in us for our guide, yet if “ Providence brings to pafs any other “ event contrary to our rational expectations, becaufe it is a clear evidence of “ his will, we muft acquiefce.”—So that

this important and self-evident truth of divine Providence, is not only acceded to, by professed christians, but by the mahometans also.—Having adopted a variety of arguments to prove that which indeed proves itself, shall proceed briefly to sum up all that is included in the term, and conclude with some moral inferences from the whole.

By Providence we are to understand three things, 1. God himself, his eternal, almighty, and immutable nature. 2. His eternal, most free, most wise, most just, and unchangeable counsel whereby he works all good things whatever, that are in the creature, and for wise and good ends permits also evil things, and 3. His almighty power and omnipotence, whereby he upholds and governs both heaven and earth with all the creatures that are therein, so that all things which the earth produces as well as rain and drought, meat and drink, health and sickness; riches and poverty, are all by his divine will and appointment, nor is any thing
in

in any respect, the result or effect of—Chance. These three things, though distinct in a sense, are unitedly and inseparably included in divine Providence.—Since the being of a Providence is evident from our very existence, the common course of nature, as well as from reason and revelation, it may be enquired, why is it so frequently denied?—The cause is obvious.—Man's will is man's natural guide, he therefore wishes *that* to guide all things; and whatever counteracts those designs, tends to excite in him murmuring and rebellion against a fact which daily experience testifies. Could we have our wills in all things, the truth might be cheerfully admitted; but as our wills are subject in every sense, to the divine will, men have recourse to expedients, if possible, to annihilate its disposing power.—In vain does man strive against Omnipotence, for whatever mortals may suppose or rather wish to imagine, all things both in heaven and earth, are under the guidance of divine Providence.—There are two ways in which the dispensations

sations of Providence appear, either mediately, or immediately. A secondary cause, and the use and instrumentality of natural means, is included in its mediate dispensations, but a miraculous and extraordinary interposition is more immediate, though we find means, sometimes, made use of even in those, as in the instance of Moses bringing water out of the rock,—God effected it, but Moses was the instrument in doing it. We are to distinguish between a means in doing or performing any thing, and the means of doing it. Though as nothing is impossible unto God, he can work without the use of any means.—The knowledge and belief of a Providence is necessary for the following reasons,—to excite our gratitude in prosperity,—to render us patient in adversity, and—to confirm our confidence in God. In the enjoyment of every social comfort, in the midst of affluence and ease, we are too apt to forget the hand that feeds us, and the power that supports us, we are imputing the benefits enjoyed either to our prudence or assiduity; but a due sense of Providence excites in us the most unfeigned

unfeigned gratitude for the mercies we receive, and leads us to ascribe all the praise where alone it is due, acknowledging our entire dependence, and living as dependent creatures.—To view the enlivening beams of mercy through the dark cloud of affliction, is more than the eye of sense can attain to, but when the discerning eye of faith perceives an all-disposing Providence, it promotes patience and resignation in the mind. Contentment, the banquet of the soul, is replenished with its diffusive consolations.—The judicious Mr. Charnocke observes, “What was God’s end in creating, is his
 “end in governing, which was the communication and diffusion of his goodness.”
 —Where are the votaries of Chance and Fortune, when adversity appears? Can such refuges as those yield any gleam of hope? Nothing can equally relieve the distressed mind as to affliction itself, similar to the consideration of Providence. Herein we know whatever befalls us is ordained, that nothing can exceed those limits, and that the Supreme Disposer is infinitely just and good. This animating
 thought,

thought, besides supporting under accumulated distresses, confirms our confidence in God.—All men place their dependence in something, though but one can ever yield us any comfort and assistance. But the man who relies on divine Providence only, is fortified against every danger, and armed against every attack. Not all the combined powers can destroy his hope, or utterly invade his comforts. In every action of his life, in every occurrence of the day, in every circumstance that attends him, in every disappointment he meets with, or every blessing he enjoys, whether exalted or debased, enriched or impoverished, living or dying, he views a Providence. So far then is the belief of this truth from exciting either melancholy or despair, that it is the only true means of obtaining solid consolation and joy, through the various scenes of life.—From the dawn of infancy to enfeebled age, in all we have or are, 'tis Providence alone that reigns ;—and Providence that rules.

14 NO 63

ESSAY

ESSAY XXIX.

O N

T I M E

A N D

ETERNITY.



ON
T I M E
A N D
E T E R N I T Y.
E S S A Y XXIX.

- “ By nature’s law, what may be, may be now ;
“ There’s no prerogative in human hours.
“ In human hearts what bolder thoughts can rise,
“ Than man’s presumption on to-morrow’s dawn ?
“ Where is to-morrow ? In another world.”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

ENNOBLED by faculties that are capacious—views that are aspiring—sentiments that are elevated—sublime, we consider the present circumscribed sphere of action too limited for our enjoyments. We are constantly pursuing some shadow, and as frequently forgetting the substance,
—we

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—we are constantly worshipping some idol, and almost invariably enslaved by some prepossession,—we are animated—dejected—confident—desponding—pursuing—avoiding—admiring—despising—alternately blissful and wretched—universally choosing and rejecting—a scene of contrarieties in which we are ever busy—but seldom profitably employed.—Veering round every pole of civil—political—literary—and social procedure, we are constantly enquiring for that, which we have not yet possessed, and which if possessed, we have forgot the value of.—Hence we complain that the space is too short to contain such multifarious benefits,—that pleasure swiftly eludes the eye of observation, and scarcely leaves a vestige to our view.—But reflection teaches us that the prelibation of pleasure is abridged not by the contracted space to enjoy it in, but by impediments arising from ourselves, and we are so perfectly heterogeneous that we complain of the want of that, which we never estimate sufficiently, even Time.—The excellence of
this

this pearl is seldom discovered until lost, and we massacre the present moment, as though the present were a never ending period.—Prostituted by some,—and lavished in unmeaning insignificance by others,—the bauble of puerile diversion, and a burden of which many wish to be exonerated, is that important talent called Time.—Invention has done its utmost, and genius strained every nerve, to devise expedients whereby the thoughtless multitude might occupy, what they are too degenerate to enjoy.—In the career of youth,—the passions are addressed,—and raptured imagination employs its innumerable agents to spur the steed of unbridled fancy. At the stern æra of maturer years another bait presents itself, and lucre promises its choicest gifts in return for an irrecoverable reality.—The barter seems advantageous to the view, and we eagerly embrace this privilege, as if it were an unfading portion. The veteran, in the wars of life, to whom the syren pleasure has long since betrayed its delusive voice, is astonishing to behold!—sportive in the

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midst

midst of age,—trifling under visual decay. Heedless of the present—regardless of the future, the same trifles gratify old age, in their degree, as delighted youth, and we return to childhood, when experience ought to make us wise.—What idea must we naturally form of this intermediate space called Time, if we were to judge of it by the conduct of men?—A period that had no reference to the past, nor any concern with the future,—a talent for which we were in no wise accountable,—and a matter of the most trivial import; a *bagatelle* merely recreative, and as insignificant in its nature, as in its effects.—With equal propriety we might be led to imagine, from the conduct of many, that they had insured, at least, a certain term of existence, if not immortality, and that they had bribed the impartial messenger of nations to wait *their* appointed time.—We could never justly suppose on the other hand, from a view of the unthinking multitude,—that they were either assailed by adverse incidents—liable to innumerable evils—in constant jeopardy—or dependant,—mortal.

While

While man is grasping after earthly joys, Time still pursues its course, and every fleeting hour emphatically declares Eternity at hand.—A state untried,—unknown,—where exquisite bliss or woe extreme is never at an end.—Delusive fancy here no longer sports,—the hypocrite unmasks,—vice is exposed in all its hideous forms, while virtue ever shines. Buoyed by some flattering hopes,—or chained to infatuation's gates,—the aged and the young are promising themselves length of days; and dancing round the precipice of death, forgetting what is near. The slender thread of life that marks the boundaries of Time is thought inflexible as the oak, and though, as Dr. Young elegantly expresses it, we are “but pensioners on the bounties of an hour,” yet acting as if this world were our sole abode!—Nature itself proclaims the transient years, and age is the monument of Time, the silent mansions of the dead still louder speak, their language is—prepare.

Can youth indulge the solemn thought, or honours yield to dust? Can monarchs listen to the dread alarm, or princes once obey? Can beauty resign its charms for putrefaction's garb, or wisdom yield to death? Can eloquence to mortality submit, or learning to the worm?—Irresistible the decree—resist in vain when once the summons comes. Here human titles are but empty sounds,—distinctions here will cease;—eternal bliss or endless woe will claim their several sons.—If any one thing may demand our peculiar attention as reasonable creatures, it is the consideration of Time and Eternity. We are convinced of the uncertainty of life,—the shortness of Time,—and in our judgments acknowledge, what in our practice we daily deny, and in the temper and dispositions of our mind disregard. The general idea we have of Time, according to Mr. Locke, is by considering any part of infinite duration as set out by periodical measures; which we obtain through those common mediums of knowledge, sensation, and reflection. But as the being of Time is self-evident,

evident, any investigation of that, would be altogether unnecessary, and it will tend more for our general edification to enquire into the *design* of Time so far as it respects mankind. It is well worthy our observation that Time is an intermediate space, a diurnal revolution, and a prelude to an infinite expansion, boundless and never ending.—Munificence on the one part provides for its benevolent designs, and equity on the other for its impartial decisions, both are exemplified in Time, as a state of probation.

Munificence appears in the preparative even this life, and equity in the result and consequence. Infinite Benignity having endued man with a faculty of discernment, deals with him as one possessed of that, in placing him in a state of trial.—Time is a talent put into our hands, for the use or abuse of which we are accountable, and yet how often is it wasted in the most trifling vanities ! and the most abject pursuits ! We use it more as a toy than as a jewel,—and rate it low, by our wanton

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abuse of it.—We may further suppose Time to be a period allotted wherein the Sovereign of the Universe will be glorified in the execution and fulfilment of his purposes. But respecting man, it is that period when the means of future bliss shall be conveyed unto him, and the earnest of a future inheritance.—The design of Time may be further elucidated by considering that it is replete with the most diversified circumstances, comprizing what to the depraved understanding may seem a heterogeneous compound, uniting in one system, a contrariety of events,—and diffusing particles contrasted in their effects throughout every atom of existence.—Thus variegated, it is subservient to the purposes of probation.—The design of Time may be also understood as that space when events shall be revealed, and appear in their natural colours. In short, we are to suppose more of it effectively, than some philosophers do in their speculations concerning space, ascribing it to mere *nihil*ity, since it demands the obeisance of all created beings,—the exertion of reason
so

so far as that can be exerted,—and the services of men to the honour of that Being who formed and upholds them. Were we to judge of the design of Time by the general conduct of men, we must imagine it to be an idle void wherein our several appetites and inclinations were to be gratified; or a state in which folly was to be idolized in every form it might assume. But as man is the actor, not the spectator in life, it highly becomes us to be concerned for the improvement of Time.—The mind of man, from its nature and properties, is capable of more extensive acquisitions than the body, and as they are more exalted, consequently better worthy the attention of a reasonable creature, whence we may deduce this self-evident proposition, that the mind is first to be considered in the improvement of Time.—The most refined notions we can imbibe, must include the most exalted object, and the sublimest pursuit. From these premises we may infer, that improvement as a positive term must relate to both. An enquiry naturally follows,

what may be considered the most exalted object, and the most sublime pursuit?— Could thought expand itself beyond temporal concerns, and soar above the clay of sensual desire, it must impartially declare the most exalted object to be that divine Being who filleth all space, whose power is infinite—whose benevolence is unlimited—and whose wisdom is infallible. —The most sublime pursuit, therefore, is a desire of an interest in his favour, and to be the subject of his peculiar regard. God being our chief object, and virtue our grand pursuit, we may be said to improve Time in the best sense of the words.

Having premised what should be our chief object in the improvement of Time, it will be necessary to observe that for this purpose, information is immediately requisite, for zeal without knowledge, is mere enthusiasm.—This information is to be found in revelation only, which directs us to the union of unsullied equity and unequalled mercy, where both are exemplified

plified—each completely satisfied, and the undeserving rendered essentially blessed. Morality then pervades our practice from the most laudable motives, and Time is improved in every sense for our present comfort and our future welfare.—Nor is this sublime pursuit in any wise destructive of the more secular improvements of Time, in diligence and industry, since those effects will necessarily follow. The fatal error in many is, that in improving Time to their worldly advantage, they are forgetful of concerns, more important.—This distinction is necessary to be made in the improvement of Time; that God is the *primary* object, others are *secondary*.—If such is the value of Time, what can be said respecting those who are wholly unconcerned about it, and are seeking to *kill* the hours, as they impiously express it, as if they had taken a long lease of their lives?—Let such remember, man is but a tenant at will, not at his *own* will;—and is momentarily liable to be turned out of his earthly dwelling.—Those who are properly concerned
for

for the improvement of Time, are moved by the consideration of Eternity, a thought that over-balances almost every other, nor can any comparison be made with it. Infinite duration is scarcely to be conceived, and Mr. Locke is of opinion, we have no positive idea of it, nor can any thing numerical inform us, since Eternity is utterly incessant.—When we annex either happiness or misery to this dread consideration, what weight and importance does it add?—Mistaken man in the career of vice rushing into unknown dangers, sporting on the verge of Eternity where thy doom is irrevocable and thy state unalterable!

Neither the allurements of reward or the threats of punishment, can of themselves awaken the besotted mind to a due sense of the value of Time and the infinite importance of Eternity:—but when that sacred breath, which breathed existence into an inanimate chaos, renovates the mind, the *improvement* of Time appears in its proper light, and the view is directed

rected unto Eternity.—As all our undertakings in this life,—all our views, our comforts, and expectations founded on sublunary blifs, can be at longeft but of fhort duration,—and as every hour haftens the end of our being born—to *die*—it appeared fuitable in a differtation on Ethics, to conclude with this folemn fubject,—a fubject that from its importance, demands our attention, and from its certainty, our belief. The annihilation of the foul is a thought fo abject, that none who efteem themfelves rational can furely adopt it, for if reason is mortal we are worfe than the beaft, for they have a fagacity called inftinct, which regulates their conduct, but man is faid to contemplate celeftial objects, and yet would his reason be mortal, fo that this abfurd notion needs no other refutation than its own language.—Formed then for immortality, we fhould confider Time as only our road or paffage, and Eternity the end of our journey. The former is encompassed with many difficulties, the latter to the virtuous, divested of any. The former is altogether uncertain, the latter unchangeable.

Since

Since life is thus truly precarious, and we hastening to a state where our doom will be unalterably fixed, is it not of the last importance for us seriously to enquire, *where are we going?* The wings of Time are accelerating that appointed period, which will land us on the shore either of eternal happiness or eternal misery.—The true value of Time can only be known by the view of what it leads to, nor the importance of Eternity, but by the consideration of what vice exposes to.—War may have slain its thousands, but delusion has destroyed its millions,—vain expectations, and flattering hopes, have lulled men into a fatal security.—All things in life point unto one single end, and death is in every enjoyment. Immersed in the mighty gulph of secular concerns,—and wading through the depths of care, when Time draws his midnight veil and threatens that the scene shall change, is not the language of our heart like that of Felix, “*Go until a more convenient season?*”—In the employment of Time man acts seldom as a rational being, in providing
only

only for the body and neglecting the mind.—Hence, in some measure originates this general unconcernedness about Futurity, for though abject servility is dreadful in the very idea, to an aspiring mind, yet we are mostly slaves to some corrupt passion or other, and in general, closely attached to the present.

The most refined pleasure of an intelligent being, must be abstracted from sense and sensible objects.—The *design*—the *improvement*—and the *importance* of Time, are more fully evidenced by their inseparable connexion with Eternity.—Contemplation is now the only emissary of the mind,—and this is so impeded by sublunary objects without,—and sensitive impediments within, that seldom, yea, very seldom can it explore the regions of inconceivable,—unutterable,—unfathomable,—boundless,—and never ending existence. Divested of every sensual obstruction, reason will expand itself in that state where it reigns immortal, fruition will supplant hope, and vision our contracted

tracted ideas.—Were we acting as the candidates for Eternity, we should be less anxious to secure the glittering baubles of Time, and were we rationalists in the most refined point of view, we should be more desirous for that state where the veil of ignorance would be taken from our mental eyes and perspicuity alone prevail.—If permanency on the one part,—or infinity on the other,—if felicity on the one part,—or infelicity on the other,—unitedly declare the true value of Time, and the importance of Futurity,—it is evident beyond all possible description, however fascinated we may be, by the pleasing objects of sense, that the *final* happiness of man consists in being *fitted* for a glorious Eternity.

14 NO 63

CURSORY REFLECTIONS

ON THE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

OF

D E I S M.



C U R S O R Y
R E F L E C T I O N S, &c.
O N
D E I S M.

Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dixit.

JUV. l. 4. 32.

THE credulity of former ages when mere exorcisms were implicitly believed,—and superstition had enslaved the minds of men, gave rise in some degree to the opposite extreme that *now* prevails, which is,—not to admit any thing as *true* unless demonstrable,—or to assent to that which cannot be universally comprehended.—Agreeable to this, our ideas of a proposition, are made the *only* standard of its truth or falshood. Hence the medium of information does not arise from the thing itself, but from our conceptions of it, consequently liable to change as often as we vary in our opinion.—Few Deists it is to be supposed, are aware that *this* is a natural consequence of their own reason-

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ing. If a man denies the proper existence of every thing he cannot account for, the being of any thing must depend on its demonstrative nature, and therefore by the same rule, he can no longer exist as an animal, than while he is capable of evincing the mode of it.—To ascribe the erecting an edifice to the materials that composed it, would no doubt, seem the height of folly; so likewise to judge by reason of the works of him who formed that intellectual faculty,—is no less absurd,—though more common,—than for any one to suppose that *wood* built the house, and not the builder.—The right of private judgment is the natural privilege of every man,—and such who act from conviction, prove themselves justly rational. But the principal mistake arises from blending mere apprehensions with solid deductions,—and exhibiting only the former as a pretence for the latter. If we say a proposition or narration is not agreeable to reason, we must be a judge of the proposition or narration itself, in order to determine that.—Should we call it irrational, because

because we cannot understand it, our comprehension must be reason itself.—If we believe the possibility of an event, only because such events have happened before, the scale of incidents must be circumscribed within the rules of precedent.—Hence, whatever is preposterous or unnatural, though we beheld it, we are not to believe, yet says a Deist, what is seen may be credited, but even in this case his eyes may deceive him.—An undoubted proof of the rationality of any thing is its agreement with itself,—but of this particular, no one can judge unless he is acquainted with the nature of the matter alluded to. As our knowledge is conversant only with those ideas whence it derives existence, to suppose that we can judge of *essences* of which we have no clear idea, is in fact to aim at more than reason itself can effect.—It would greatly accelerate our discoveries, and check the enormities of error, if on the one hand we duly considered the extent of our ideas, which is confined to the objects around us,—and on the other hand were content to receive what

we could not absolutely refute, or mathematically demonstrate.—Facts in history, no doubt, frequently undergo false aspersions from such who were never in those parts of the world where they are visual,—and this is evidently concluding only from what they are conversant with. If our acquisitions in science are thus contracted, nothing can more fully prove the fallacy of denying the truth of that, whereof we have no clear conception, and determining the reality of any thing only by our knowledge of it.—Admitting that nothing is to be received as true, which either exceeds or disagrees with our own ideas, it may be naturally asked,—what becomes of the past? and where is the present?

After this exordium it will be requisite to proceed briefly to a more specific enquiry into the general principles of Deism.—The first principle that we may arrange under the idea of scepticism, is to reject every seeming innovation.—The Scriptures are therefore
 objected

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objected to, by the Deists, on the score of antiquity,—and to support their opinion in this matter they refer us to *Zoroaster* and *Sanchoniatho*, concerning whose original historians are greatly divided.—These characters are opposed to that of Moses as more ancient, thereby endeavouring to prove that the Mosaic account of the creation is a mere transcript of the discovery of others.

The Chaldeans and Persians had each a Zoroaster, and we are told the Bactrian and Persian Zoroasters have been confounded with the Chaldean, and adds an ingenious writer on this subject “there
“ never has appeared a name about
“ which there is spread such seemingly
“ inexplicable confusion.”—After various researches it has been found, that the description of the great Zoroaster perfectly agrees with that of Moses, and serves only to prove the real antiquity of the latter, under the mangled detail of the former. From the great resemblance that subsists between the two characters of Zoroaster and Moses in the *smallest* circumstances,

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stances, we find the unbelieving world have only been opposing Moses to himself, and defeating their own purpose, by their reference to oriental history.—What is yet more surprizing, we learn that the doctrine of the first Zoroaster agreed with that of Moses.—The grand object of such who boasted their Zoroaster and Sanchoniatho, was, to produce *earlier* writers than Moses,—and a different account of the creation,—but when their efforts prove vain and ineffectual, it will greatly diminish the force of their reasoning, and the credibility of their *own* assertions.

By such who have accurately investigated the matter we are told, that the eastern account, whether or not of the Phœnicians originally relating to this pretended Sanchoniatho, is evidently borrowed from the writings of Moses, to which it is opposed by Deists who aim to invalidate the authority of the Scriptures.—Hence, notwithstanding the invidious attempts of men, we find the original doctrine concerning God and the creation,

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tion, came from Moses.—The ancients in general agree that there is a God,—that he created the universe,—nor do they absolutely assert the eternity of matter.—The munificent Former of the world could alone tell *how* he formed it, and it has been shrewdly observed, “ Even if “ Adam had written the history, he could “ not have told what passed in those days “ in which he was not.” The assaults of infidelity are too weak in one instance,—and too precarious in another, to destroy a superstructure raised on facts well authenticated, whether they appeal to a Zoroaster of dubious original,—to Phœnician records in quest of Sanchoniatho,—or to Thales—Anaximander,—and Pythagoras in opposition to Moses.—The disagreement of those historians with each other, who severally claim under various forms one favourite champion is a proof that they were ignorant of the matter,—and a Deist whose professed creed is only to admit the *best* evidence in defence of truth, in adhering to such fabulous narrations, contradicts himself,—and is con-

demned by his *own* reasoning.—Is it not equally probable abstracted from every reference to the Mosaic history, that Moses was the most ancient, as it is that Zoroaster was? Can the impartial Deist inform us whether it was the Chaldean or Persian Zoroaster that came down from the fiery mountain, since that is reported of both? Or will the Infidel convince us which of the Zoroasters it was that destroyed his enemies by magic, since both are said to have effected it?—If then the antiquity of either is *hypothetical*, as it appears to be, the greater antiquity of Moses is equally credible, and worthy our rational belief.—A legion of traditions are recorded by the enemies to revelation in order to support their claim to greater antiquity than the books of Moses,—and among other references they have recourse to the Egyptians whose doctrines concerning the Creator and the creation correspond with that of Moses.—As it is but reasonable from all circumstances to conclude, that the Egyptians took their account of what agrees so well with the writings

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writings of Moses from the books themselves, we find the Deists have no just claim to that antiquity which they oppose to the sacred pages.—The ancient and modern Deists have differed greatly in their opinion,—the former approaching far nearer truth than the latter,—since Lord Herbert who is the reputed patron of the ancient system, denied revelation from the supposed sufficiency of natural religion,—but acknowledged a particular Providence—the immortality of the soul,—and future rewards and punishment.—Natural religion has, in many instances, proved itself unequal to the arduous task of moral government, since by it is implied simply,—the spontaneous effusions of the mind,—for no other can be natural.

This if it has led some men in the paths of virtue, has directed many others into the ways of vice, and when conjecture, which must be the case here, is the only medium of information, a miserable uncertainty prevails at best.—What is natural religion?—Is it something that exists
antecedent

antecedent to all things, or subsequent to some prior cause? As it relates to creatures, it must be the effect of some superior agent.—Such a principle acting in intelligent animals has no other stimulus but a view of present apparent good,—nevertheless we find by the light of nature, men have been unable to discriminate between their interest or injury. What has the light of nature done for the untutored Arabs,—whose gain is plunder, and whose bliss is blood?—Whatever discoveries the more enlightened Persians have made, has no doubt been by their supposed Zoroaster or rather Moses.—As even natural religion is derived,—there is nothing *unnatural* in the idea of a revelation—especially as by a candid review of those who are under no other luminary than nature, we must own there is great necessity for further information, and how they are to acquire that unless it be revealed, may be difficult to determine. What knew Anaximander—Anaximenes—Epicurus and Zeno, of the Deity, but by the light of nature?—If as the original Deists admit, there

there is a particular Providence,—it is but reasonable and equitable on their own principles, that there should be some revelation,—for if we are individually dependent on the Deity, it is but reasonable to suppose he will declare to us his will,—and it is but equitable in a just and holy Being to signify what he requires of his accountable creatures.—Lord Herbert's objection to christianity is, because it is not diffused universally.—On the same principles a man might question whether there were such relations as good and evil, since the *true* knowledge of them is only partial,—or deny his own existence because all the world were not acquainted with the manner and circumstances of it.

Truth though demonstrably evident, when it counteracts the policy of men, and inculcates self-denial is frequently its own adversary,—for that which renders it intrinsically excellent is the occasion of its being rejected by the world in general, who are easy and content in the slavery of vice ;—and therefore although
christianity

christianity unfetters the captive, and brings him into the perfect liberty of the gospel, the unbelieving hug themselves in the chains of delusion.—Hence Lord Herbert's objection so far from being any argument against christianity, is a very powerful and insurmountable one in defence of it.—The intended brevity of these Reflections forbid an enlargement here, and having in some degree evinced the error of the ancient system of Deism, shall proceed cursorily to review the modern.—To deny a particular Providence is the grand characteristic of the *modern* Deists.—They suppose, like the Epicureans, that the Deity never concerns himself with the affairs of men,—that when he formed all things he gave them laws but does not now attend to them.

Of this sentiment was Lord Bolingbroke,—but there are another description of men who acknowledge a God and his Providence, but reprobate eternal principles of morality, and consider man as accountable only to human laws.—At
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the head of this class of Deists is Hobbes, whose sentiments in many respects Lord Bolingbroke is said to have adopted.—It is well worth our observation, that the Deists in denying a particular Providence contend not merely with a set of propositions, but with *facts*, which every man's experience, and no doubt Lord Bolingbroke's among others, must in some degree convince him of.—But supposing the truth of it would admit of any doubt, they must unavoidably undeify Deity, for to assert that his paternal care is not extended over *all* his works is to insinuate *cruelty*, or *incapacity*, either of which destroys their own proper notions of God.—In this instance likewise they contradict themselves, for a Being infinitely good can never view evil with indifference, nor a Being infinitely powerful be utterly unable to prevent it.

While a man meets with any thing in his life that is improbable, or can discern any traces of preservation, he may very rationally conclude there is a particular Providence.

Providence.—The heathen world could discover this truth by the light of reason, and the want of knowing this is a plain proof, since there are men so ignorant, of the *necessity* of a revelation. Can any thing be more ridiculous than to imagine the Deity gave laws to his creatures, an obedience of which he never regarded? Does not this act of divine legislation at least, prove some attention to the interests of mankind?—But the further we investigate, the more we see how they defeat their *own* arguments.--Hobbes likewise has displayed some ingenuity in his mode of reasoning, by endeavouring to reconcile two opposite principles in asserting the Providence of God, and that man is in no wise accountable for the breach of the divine law,—acknowledging at the same time the claim which the laws of civil society have on every individual, and thereby attributing greater authority to the creature, than to the Creator.

Willing to extend his degenerate notions to the very summit of impiety,—he
denies

denies every moral obligation, and admits of free licence to do evil.--The Deists again are self-refuted by disclaiming revelation on account of various religions, since they themselves disagreed in many particulars, as has been here recited.—The first object of Deism is to prove, that the scripture account of the creation is traditional,—that as it is to be discovered by reason, there was no necessity for a revelation of it, and Lord Bolingbroke, though he derives his information, solely, from the account Moses has given, is elaborate in proving by reason what only serves to corroborate the truth of revelation. The antiquity of Moses has been already evinced, therefore neither his original nor the validity of his assertions can be disputed on that account, it therefore appears to be the second principal intent of Deism to invalidate or question the truth of scripture narration, and this for two reasons,—Its improbability,—and unprecedented nature.

If

If Lord Bolingbroke could admit that “high probability is often to be received as certainty,” it renders their own demonstrations, if they can be called such, at best only hypothetical.—That the world should be peopled by one family after the general deluge, is charged with every mark of absurdity by infidels, but if from Adam could spring an innumerable posterity, why, with equal rationality might not the former account be true? If past events never could exist that were improbable, future improbable occurrences by parity of reasoning, could never take place. It is determining the possibility of any thing, by its correspondence and agreement with our ideas of it, and not by the power that regulates—governs—and orders all things.—So that what we suppose true, must be so, and what we imagine otherwise, must be false.—The most singular transactions that swell the page of history, have at one period of time seemed unlikely to come to pass, and yet have been exactly accomplished.—Rome when in its meridian glory,—the
 admiration

admiration and terror of the universe—that gave laws to the world,—and dictated to inferior nations, seemed far remote from vassalage and destruction, and yet its pristine splendour ultimately issued in ruin and disgrace.—When the Jewish Sanhedrin were convened,—and Jerusalem had every trace of dignity and grandeur, how improbable did it seem that this great city should become desolate,—uninhabited,—the refuge only of the wild beast of the forest,—and yet this is now a fact which Palestine can testify. Let not the Deist then use such an argument against revelation, as must annihilate if it were possible, even every thing that had a being. In relation to the past, where we cannot disprove our assent is not unreasonable,—respecting the present, we judge from what we see,—and with regard to the future, from what we have known,—now know, and what it is probable may be. If our decisions are utterly incompetent in what relates to ourselves, and concerning objects with which we are conversant, it is the height of presump-

tion to assume a knowledge of what is antecedent to, and extraneous from the usual mediums of science. The unprecedented nature of facts recorded in Scripture history is alledged as a proof of their entire falshood. That the sea should be divided and a numerous host pass over on dry land,—that water should spring from a rock,—that the Israelites should be fed with manna in the wilderness,—that their garments should not decay during such a length of time,—and the miraculous appearances for their preservation throughout, are facts that are unparalleled.—But in profane history how many astonishing feats do we read of concerning Alexander—Pompey—and Cesar that are generally credited, though many of them may have little of probability, and no precedent in their support.—To suppose that nothing can exist, but what has existed before, is circumscribing the power of Deity, and rendering Infinity, finite.—The supposed disagreement of Scripture narration with profane authors, is no proof of its falshood, because at least,
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the authority of inspired writers is *equally* credible with that of common historians.

If ever any perversion of words was glaring and palpable, it is most unquestionably so in Lord Bolingbroke's affected criticism of the epithets applied to Deity, of *seeing*, &c.—the *arm* of the Lord, and such like, which phrases were evidently adopted merely to reduce those things to our comprehension, which would otherwise be incomprehensible, and tropes or figures of rhetoric that rather prove the dignity of the Scripture language. A modern Deist doubts whether the books commonly ascribed to Moses were written by him, and the very conclusive reason he gives is,—because they *might* not be written by him.—To what refuges are such reasoners driven!—It has been pertinently remarked by an ingenious writer, that “until the Deist can shew the inter-
“ position of the divine Providence to be
“ impossible, there is nothing incredible
“ in the Bible history.”—Unless we can form ideas of Deity as assert his power to

be limited,—his wisdom fallible,—his pre-science partial,—or his nature imperfect,—and reconcile these to right reason, we can never rationally suppose any thing where Providence is concerned, and that is concerned in all things, either impossible or incredible.—The miracles recorded in sacred history are not matters of course, or according to nature, but preternatural,—extraordinary,—unusual. — To deny the possibility of such things is not only questioning the veracity of the narrator, but the power of the performer. — To say that a thing cannot be, because it is out of *our* power to accomplish it, is either making man omnipotent, or Deity dependent,—it is in fact usurping an ability which on many occasions we are constrained to allow in our fellow mortals, and are often convinced of our own comparative inferiority to them.

If a simple relation of facts is challenged as improbable and absurd, the more refined and preternatural exertion of *prophecy* will, no doubt, be denied.—

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The word *Inspiration* has given some offence to the deistical world, but if their champion Lord Bolingbroke could say that, “ Ideas seem often to be better determined in birds and beasts, than in men,” it is reasonable to suppose two things from his own assertion,—that we are incompetent to judge what is inspiration,—and,—that a preternatural discovery to our senses is requisite.—If our ideas are not sufficiently determined as to the nature of inspiration, we cannot charge those with imposture who are said to be inspired, from our ignorance,—and as our general knowledge is so confessedly indeterminate, some preternatural information became *necessary*, because we possessed none naturally.—Prescience, which constitutes prophecy, is allowed on all hands, a power with which no one is invested, merely by virtue of his animal existence.—Common experience would contradict such an absurd supposition.—If then no man enjoys it naturally, it must be supernatural, and that it has existed in some, is evident, not only from

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what they say, but what *we see*. The accomplishment of those predictions proves beyond all controversy, the certainty of their prescience, and that such men prophesied is sufficiently demonstrable from profane history.

A Deist can only suppose they did not predict what should happen, but cannot refute what others testify.—So that his argument is again founded on an *hypothesis*,—and he is chargeable with that error, which he indiscriminately imputes to the christian world,—believing what he cannot demonstrate.—For unless it can be demonstrated false, it is capable of equal demonstration that it is true.—If inspiration as to its nature and tendencies is unintelligible, it were folly in the extreme, to call any thing spurious that flows from it, or impossible, that it dictates.—If intelligible, the Deist is obliged to contrast *his* ideas of inspiration to ours,—and thereby detect the error. Creation, for instance, is unintelligible as to the mode of it,—we know there must have been a
creation,

creation, because we exist progressively, we cannot therefore deny it, because we do not understand it, seeing it is self-evident. — Lord Bolingbroke says, “ The
 “ analytic method itself, our surest road
 “ to science, does not conduct us further
 “ than extreme probability, as it has been
 “ observed, and this probability must
 “ stand us in lieu of certainty.”—Admitting this, there is no argument that can possibly be adopted, which will destroy the point we contend for.—From his own concessions, an inspiration was probable, because our ignorance, rendered it necessary. — The same noble writer further acknowledges, that “ an extraordinary
 “ action of God on the human mind,
 “ which the word inspiration is now used
 “ to denote, is not more inconceivable
 “ than the ordinary action of mind on
 “ body, and of body on mind,” he therefore allows the possibility of it.—Lord Bolingbroke again confesses his ignorance to the following effect, “ The supreme
 “ Being is the first, and strictly, the sole
 “ efficient cause. But as we know no-
 K k 4 “ thing

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“ thing of his manner of being, so we
“ know nothing of his manner of caus-
“ ing.” Thus the doctrine of inspiration
is in effect, allowed by the grand advocate
for modern Deism, and that once ac-
knowledgeed, the divine authority of the
Scriptures is proved to a demonstration.

If the supreme Being is the first and
sole efficient cause, he must unquestion-
ably be so, of what relates to himself,
and if we are ignorant of his manner of
causing, it were requisite that it should be
revealed.—Were we certain of his man-
ner of causing, inspiration might be ques-
tioned, but if we are unacquainted with
it, it is folly and presumption to deny the
possibility of it.—From the perverted and
false notions of inspiration which some
enthusiasts may adopt, the Deist reasons
on the absurdity of it, forgetting that the
abuse of a thing is no argument against
the thing itself, or any proof of its natu-
ral tendency. To decide in cases where
we are confessedly ignorant, is contradict-
ing our own acknowledgments, and a
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man might as well deny that an island were furrounded by the sea because he never *saw* it, as to disbelieve all he cannot discover by the aid of his natural faculties.—Had reason been equal to the task of revelation, inspiration would have been utterly unnecessary, but to render inspired truths unquestionable, they are confirmed by facts, and an appeal to the senses, whereas the heathen oracles could boast no such testimony, nor the magicians so plainly manifest the accomplishment of what they affectedly predicted.—If the extent of human knowledge is as circumscribed as even Deists represent it, and its reality equally precarious, there were no other possible medium of communication, but by a preternatural discovery,—and under such a train of difficulties to contend with, the mind must be particularly prepared to receive such truths as are above its natural comprehension, and furnished with suitable qualifications to deliver them to others. Though Hesiod and Plato intruded their Genii and Dæmons on our view, yet absurd

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furd as they were, it does not follow from
 thence, that the inspiration we contend
 for, is to be ascribed to any such original.
 —Every argument deduced from the
 practice of the heathens in this particular,
 rather serves as a confutation of Deism,
 than as any reasonable plea in its behalf,
 because the introducing such Genii evi-
 dently shews, that they supposed some
 extraneous assistance necessary.—If there
 are men who make such improvements
 and discoveries in science, as were utterly
 unknown before, and demonstrate what
 had been previously rejected as absurd, if
 a Newton could establish his system in op-
 position to the Ptolemaic and Copernican,
 is it either improbable, or irrational to
 suppose, that there were men, who by in-
 spiration, or a superior degree of know-
 ledge, could be the instruments of reveal-
 ing the most important truths?—But we
 may safely draw this inference from the
 concession of infidels, that *inspiration* is
 necessary,—may have been,—though as
 they cannot conceive *how*, they deny it.

The

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The diction and phraseology of the Scriptures is next arraigned at the bar of Deism.—The use of allegory is impiously branded with the epithet delusive, and what constitutes its elegance and simplicity they consider as the means of chicanery and deceit, calculated to mislead the judgment, and blind the understanding.—Artful mysteries enveloped in ambiguity, is the unnatural, and unjust delineation of Scripture which they exhibit to the view.—The theologian they cruelly insinuate hereby defends his craft, and the metaphysician conceals himself, they imagine, under impervious subtilties.—But with what severity will the charge be retorted on the infidel, who employs sophistry and ontology in his support—scientific,—scholastic,—and studied phrases as a veil to his dark designs.—Hobbes's abstruse disquisitions, and Spinoza's heterogeneous conjectures form one part of the delusive system alluded to. If then ambiguity could be urged as an objection against divine revelation, the Deists err in condemning what they universally practice.

practice.—Though the Bramins may have a book of Scripture called the *Shaster*,—the Persians their *Zundavaftaw*, and Mahometans their *Koran*, yet a variety in this respect, is no more a proof that what we esteem the inspired writings are false, than the various ways of effecting one thing, would shew the impossibility of its accomplishment.—But on the contrary if ours is contrasted to those, the superior excellence of the former will evince the fallacy of the latter.—Lord Bolingbroke introduces three characters, the *Theist*—the *Atheist*, and the *Divine*, and by the most partial reasoning raises his own structure on the ruins of theology.—On these principles the idea of a particular Providence is utterly rejected, and even the immortality of the soul is considered doubtful.—We are also told by Deists that the belief of future rewards and punishments is a political device calculated to over awe the untutored multitude, and subjugate the illiterate and undiscerning world in the yoke of implicit faith. But perhaps nothing can be more easily proved

ed by reason, than the certainty of a future judgment, as perfectly consistent with the justice and mercy of Deity, and the inadequate retributions of this life. But if men can deny every moral attribute of Deity, and every moral obligation among men, there can be no bounds to their infidelity, nor any limit to their impiety.—Virtue and vice are considered by such as the most indeterminate ideas, and either condemned or approved, as they correspond with the nature,—circumstances,—and situation of the agent,—indifferent in themselves, the mere impulse of animal passions, or intellectual prejudices.

The most violent—general—and definitive charge against the sacred Scriptures is, that as a standard of belief it annihilates the use of reason,—destroys freedom of thought, and liberty of judgment, proving itself at all times the fit instrument for tyranny, oppression,—bigotry—and superstition.—But the Deist is scarcely aware that where there is no rule there can be no certainty, and even the discoveries
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of reason, if not determinable as to their truth and rectitude by some criterion, can never be ascertained with any degree of accuracy and precision.—For instance—suppose one man professes himself utterly unprejudiced, and judging wholly from conviction, assents to a certain set of propositions; another equally unprejudiced, and guided by reason, adopts very opposite principles: how then can it be determined in such a case which is rational?—Each system we must suppose consistent with itself, and in order to determine between truth and error, the acceptance of the word reason cannot be arbitrary, and some one must establish a rule, the consequence of which is, he supposes himself infallible.—This is literally the case with the deistical world, they allow of no liberality in any but themselves, and yet are the most illiberal to others.—The man who assents to what we call divine revelation, may with equal justice plead its evidence to *his* understanding, as the Deist who denies it for *want* of that.—What is reasonable will ever be determined
more

more or less by the ideas men entertain of reason.—The cavils of Deism then arise more from caprice, than fair deduction, from prejudice, than impartial investigation. Unless it can be proved that the conceptions or reason of any *one* man is sufficient to invalidate a system, the arguments said to arise from the want of comprehension, is at best allowing unbelievers what they contend for, only a *partial* defect.—Some comprehend a truth,—others cannot—the medium of understanding is analagous in each, does it therefore follow that it is error because *all* cannot comprehend it? Would not the followers of Solon have been chargeable with the utmost folly, had they disbelieved the equity of his laws because they could not understand them?—A revelation is a relative communication of a something before unknown, and where that is not universal, the subject of it remains locally mysterious.—If “*Search the Scriptures,*” is a positive command, no one need complain of being fettered by unintelligible matters, where investigation is enjoined
prior

prior to our belief.—The Deists profess to disbelieve *all* revelation, and object to the christian, for want of an external evidence and an universal propagation.—The proofs resulting from the former are transmitted to us by history, and singularly verified in the present state of the Jews,—the inferences drawn from the partiality of its propagation, by no means destroy its authenticity,—since vulgar errors are often more distinguished for their *universality*, than for any *other* property whatever.—Certainty is of a three-fold nature,—*moral*,—*physical*,—or *mathematical*.—Moral certainty is when the evidence depends on a proper connection of circumstances, and a sufficient testimony so as to exclude all reasonable doubt.

Physical certainty is an evidence to our senses through the different mediums either of seeing or hearing.—Mathematical certainty is a species of demonstration that must preclude all doubt, as that ten is less than twenty, or a half is less than the
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the whole.—To the first degree of certainty, revelation has an undoubted claim, as will appear on a candid and impartial view.—From the Mosaic to the christian dispensation, there is an indissoluble connection of circumstances.—In the former, man is described in his primeval state of innocence, with that brevity, which characterises this inspired historian.—His deviation from the immediate injunctions of his Maker, and in consequence of that, a total depravation of manners, is described with that natural simplicity which is the invariable attendant of truth.—The promulgation of the law, a system reasonable and just, is represented with a majesty suitable to the divine legislator.—In this decalogue there is nothing contradictory to reason, or repugnant to the laws of civil society, but when opposed to those of Lycurgus, they not only claim our superior reverence and esteem, but our acknowledgment of their divine authority.—Montesquieu, sensible how much human laws are regulated by the caprice of interested men, says, “Aristotle wanted

“ to satisfy sometimes his jealousy against
 “ Plato, and sometimes his passion for
 “ Alexander. Plato was incensed against
 “ the tyranny of the people of Athens.”

—The same ingenious writer adds, “ The
 “ laws always meet the passions and pre-
 “ judices of the legislator.”—How con-
 trasted is that pattern of uniformity, the
 law of Moses, to the precepts of unen-
 lightened heathens! The sacrifices and
 ceremonies in the Levitical law evidently
 prefigured the Messiah, nor could the
 prophets, who severally foretold the com-
 ing of the Messiah, be influenced by any
 sinister views, since they hereby incurred
 the general displeasure of the people, the
 loss of their lives and property.—At a
 time when the use of particular ceremo-
 nies was deemed essential, when the
 Jewish nation distinguished itself by the
 observance of these rites,—the predicted
 abolition of customs that were not only
 become natural to them, but approved
 by them, must be an unpopular thesis,—
 a disinterested presage,—and therefore
 remote from fraud or artifice.—But when
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the christian dispensation, like the sun emerging from the sable night, bursts forth in its meridian lustre, do we in any wise see a contradiction to, or disagreement with the former?—On the contrary, a perfect and compleat accomplishment.—The Jews who had vainly supposed the Messiah would appear in pomp and regal splendour, with all the brilliant appendages of imperial dignity, deliberately rejected the admonitions, and despised the warning of the prophets, who had otherwise described the manner of his coming.—But facts confuted them, and we find that impious Herod sought every means to slay the infant, whose advent was attended with such preternatural appearances.—He was born in a manger,—of mean ostensible parents,—but at an uncommon age gave such displays of supernatural wisdom, as astonished the wise and learned, *he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*,—he went about ever doing good,—when he was reviled, he reviled not again,—he prayed for his enemies, healed the sick and afflicted,—

and diffused consolation and peace wherever he came.—Whatever was predicted aforetime came to pass in these latter days, and life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel.—From this perfect agreement between the Old and New Testament, we are arrived at a degree of *moral certainty* respecting the christian revelation.—Perhaps *physical certainty* is no less to be discovered in the sacred pages of inspiration, and whatever serves to manifest it, must be considered as an additional proof of their divine authority.—From the earliest ages of time to the present moment, the effects ascribed to the fall of man have been uniformly evident. No human composition antecedent to the Scriptures ever gave an adequate description hereof, and the accounts we receive from them are perfectly conformable to experience, and daily testified by facts.

That a reasonable creature capable of considering and reflecting on what relates to himself, should be the subject of *fear*,
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a principle of which we have *no* account before the fall,—is an invariable testimony, a sensitive evidence of the truth of revelation.—Whatever innate fortitude men may be endued with, there is nevertheless, frequent traces of fear among the most heroic, all which are plain indications of guilt, and future retribution.—Though it may be deemed mechanical with regard to the animal, yet it is intellectual with respect to the mental system.—In opposition to this, the stoics contended we might be exempt from fear by a certain discipline.—The regular succession of day and night as related in the sacred pages, is also evident to our senses. There appears no confusion in the works of nature, nor any contradiction in *this* narrative to what we *see*, and if so, Why not allow truth to this authority, as well as to the various and divided opinions of men?

The several predictions in this book have likewise an evidence to our senses by their literal fulfillment, as respecting the

Jews who we *see* are scattered over all the earth,—fugitives,—dispersed,—and excluded from the government or dominion of nations.—The destruction of Jerusalem—its present desolate state, is another sensitive evidence which cannot be denied.—Admitting that this book were a cunningly devised fable, how is it that those several prophecies it contains have been so invariably accomplished? A man may have ingenuity enough to describe a state and circumstance that might happen in future, from a retrospective view of the past, when it is out of the power of so limited a creature to effect the thing itself.—The miracles which Christ performed in causing the dumb to speak,—the deaf to hear,—the lame to walk,—and the dead to return to life, were such evidences as defeat every attempt of the adversary.—It never can be supposed that *all* these people were deceived in a matter that so nearly related to them, and the advantage they could derive from propagating a falsehood could never be any sufficient inducement, as will be evinced in the sequel.—

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The preternatural attestations that accompanied the ignominious death of the divine Messiah, were evidences to the senses even of those, who would have gladly proved him an impostor.—When the graves were opened and an universal darkness prevailed,—when the very heavens proclaimed the Deity of the crucified Immanuel, could *all* of the surrounding multitude be imposed upon?—Were there no philosophers at that time who could account for this extraordinary phenomenon, or disprove it? But facts are stubborn.—Not only the miracles which Christ performed were sufficient evidences to the senses, but likewise those of his apostles.—The external evidence to our animal senses is confirmed by an internal evidence to our intellectual discernment, and there we see every concomitant of truth irresistibly prevalent in a book, where there is a simple appeal to the understanding, without any probable effort to deceive.

Whereas in human compositions the narrator is seldom content with the bare recital of an event, but introduces his rhetorical excrescences to add a lustre to the dull excellencies of his story.—But in the sacred writings no such expedients are adopted.—Revelation then as another insurmountable proof of its veracity, claims a *physical certainty*.—The Deist will find himself irremediably confuted, should the truths of revelation likewise appear capable of *mathematical certainty*.—As a system of Ethics in which the happiness of man and the honour of Deity is consulted, nothing can be more illustriously comprehensive than the precepts of Scripture.—The common devices of men are replete with apparent benefit, and concealed injury,—the policy of nations has been merely to protect themselves, or to extend their dominion by conquest.—But Christ says, “ My kingdom is not of this world,” it is opposed to every thing which men in general call great or good.—Self-denial,—peace with all men,—love to each other,—respect to superiors,

riors,—cheerful subordination and submission,—patience in affliction,—forgiving injuries,—returning good for evil,—studying the welfare of all men, and the happiness of each individual, constant,—generous,—benevolent,—charitable,—humble and contented, are the natural characteristics of *genuine* votaries of christianity.—Whatever contrasted effects are seen in *some* of its professors, do not flow from this source of virtues.—We are taught by this immaculate system not only to avoid evil, but the very *appearance* of evil,—not only to do good to others,—but to do unto every one as we would be done unto.

Contrast the purity of this system to those of Epicurus and others, the ideas of Providence which the Scriptures hold forth, to those representations of the heathen deities, who are said to be utterly regardless of the actions of men.—We are taught by the light of nature, which the Deists so much extol, to revenge injuries,—and a mere savage ferocity is almost

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most deified as an unequalled virtue.—
But the language of Inspiration is,—
“ Pray for your enemies,—bless them
“ which despitefully use and persecute
“ you.”——If benevolence exceeds the
malignity of resentment in intrinsic ex-
cellence, or self-denial the uncontrouled
ambition of men,—the former is as de-
monstrably superior to the latter, as in
numbers ten exceeds five,—so by parity
of reasoning we may say, the divinity of
the Scriptures is capable of *mathematical*
certainty.

Having proved that the Scriptures are
capable of every degree of certainty,
shall next briefly attend to the probability
of deception by them.—The apostles who
were the emissaries of the gospel, were
most of them illiterate,—poor,—despised
men,—such who had no lucrative view to
serve, nor any emolument to obtain.
They were not leaders of a sect, because
they disclaimed every kind of authority
but what they derived from their divine
Master, nor can it be reasonably supposed
they

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they meant to exalt themselves, because this alone rendered them despicable in the eyes of many.—They suffered imprisonment,—pains and hunger,—reproach and infamy,—cruelty and persecution,—and an ignominious death. Can any dispassionate man then suppose they were led to this by any interested views? The worst that the infidel himself can say, may be a possible infatuation, and that is easily proved false, because they triumphed in the view of dissolution.

Had the apostolic system proved popular in its nature, it was far from being a likely means of aggrandisement to those who first propagated it, because it professed no connection with the civil interests of men, or to establish an infallible authority in themselves, which some perverters have done who claim them for their pattern and original.—That illiterate men could devise a scheme whereby the most learned should be under an intellectual vassalage, seems utterly improbable, and that such who endured every possible
hardship

hardship in defence of this system could be impostors, has not the least face of probability. Mr. Soame Jenyns's second position in his unanswerable treatise on the Internal Evidence of Christianity, "that
 " from this book (the Bible) may be ex-
 " tracted a system of religion entirely
 " new both with regard to the object and
 " the doctrines, not only infinitely su-
 " perior to, but unlike every thing which
 " had ever before entered into the mind
 " of man,"—is unquestionably evident.—
 The self-denying doctrines,—the illustri-
 ous examples,—the unadorned simplicity,
 yet native elegance of the Scripture lan-
 guage, are no inconsiderable proofs of its
 divine authority.—It afforded various dis-
 putations, and at length issued in an un-
 decided controversy among the ancient
 philosophers, what was the *chief good*, but
 revelation with irresistible power and ve-
 racity, determines that hitherto undeter-
 mined point, and convinces every man of
 the reality and truth of its solution.—
 Whatever revelation declares, conscience
 acquiesces in, and were there no other,
 this

this alone would be sufficient proof of its divinity.—As these Reflections are only cursory, shall conclude with some general inferences from what has been advanced. —A revelation was *necessary*, because the light of nature was insufficient to instruct us.—This is proved by the laws and opinions of the ancients.—A revelation was essential to the happiness of mankind, this appears from the similarity of those discoveries of the light of nature to revelation which serve to make men happy. By civilization and moral obligations. If a revelation is necessary, and all men pretend to some whether natural or supernatural, it follows that the revelation which conduces most to the happiness of men, is most to be preferred.—The several arguments in favour of the christian revelation are drawn from its origin,—its effects,—its testimonies,—its permanency,—its singularity,—its simplicity,—its opposing the interest of men,—its proof of the future, by the fulfillment of the past.

If

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If the Deist can acknowledge that its precepts excel every other revelation, as it by no means denies free enquiry but universally enjoins it, while there is every proof that facts and experience can give of its authenticity, it is utterly irrational to disbelieve what cannot be contrasted to its *superior*,—or compared to its *equal*.

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